

CONTENTS.

APRIL—JUNE, 1936.

POETRY—	PAGE
THE MOON HATH NOT. By JAMES STEPHENS ...	1
THE LITTLE FIELD OF BARLEY. By F. R. HIGGINS	3
SPINOZA. By JACK LINDSAY	4
VILLON ORDERS HIS TOMB IN THE FIRST-FLOOR CHAPEL OF THE NUNS OF SAINT-AVOYE. <i>After the French of Francois Villon.</i> By MICHAEL SCOT ...	9
A POET'S PROGRESS IN THE THEATRE. By PADRAIC COLUM	10
A DEUCE O' JACKS. A PLAY IN ONE ACT. By F. R. HIGGINS	24
DANIEL CORKERY. By SEAN O'FAOLAIN	49
BIBLIOGRAPHIES OF 1916 AND THE IRISH REVO- LUTION. No. 5—JAMES CONNOLLY. By P. S. O'HEGARTY	62
BIBLIOGRAPHICAL NOTES. By M. J. MACMANUS ...	65
BOOK REVIEWS	67

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Letters should be addressed to 2 Crow Street, DUBLIN, and communications with regard to advertisements, subscriptions, etc., should be sent to the Manager of The Dublin Magazine at that address.

Price 2s. 6d.

Annual Subscription 10s. 6d. post free.

LONDON AGENTS : THE HOLBORN PUBLISHING AND DISTRIBUTING CO.,
57-58 CHANCERY LANE, W.C.2.

MESSRS. JOHN & EDWARD BUMPUS, LTD., 477 OXFORD STREET, W.1.
MESSRS. SIMPKIN MARSHALL LTD., 4 STATIONER'S HALL COURT, E.C.4.



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THE DUBLIN MAGAZINE

VOL. XI.—No. 2.
(New Series)

APRIL—JUNE, 1936.

Price 2/6

THE MOON HATH NOT

By James Stephens

THE moon hath not got any light;
All that beauty, all that power,
Is a cheat upon the sight,
Is come and gone within the hour!
What is pure,
Or what is lovely?
Nothing is that will endure!

An apple-blossom in the spring,
When spring awakens everything,
Is pure or lovely as it please,
Or not as it knows not of these!
What is pure,
Or what is lovely?
Nothing is that will endure!

Pure is cherished in a dream,
Loveliness in little thought;
Out of nowhere do they gleam,
Out of nothing are they wrought!
What is pure,
Or what is lovely?
Nothing is that will endure!

Courage, goodness, tenderness :
Beauty, wisdom, ecstasy :
Wonder, love, and loveliness :
Hope, and immortality :
What is pure,
Or what is lovely ?
Nothing is that will endure !

Pure and lovely sleep and wait,
Where not good nor ill is done,
In the keep, within the gate,
At the heart of everyone :
What is pure,
Or what is lovely ?
All is, and doth all endure.

THE LITTLE FIELD OF BARLEY

By F. R. Higgins

SINCE Michaelmas I know they're saying that I'm a changling,
 not a youth ;
 They haven't a thought of how I'm flayed to madness like a
 hapless lout—
 Yes, flayed by love of a thorough-bred lady for whom grass
 listened when evening came ;
 Ah, she the clergy won't defame—her name lies sealed within
 my mouth !

Of well-sprung women she's the spine that bears all brightness,
 that I swear ;
 I've seen the skin shine through her coat when not a comb could
 hold her hair ;
 And towards her hips her body seemed a corner of the barley
 field—
 But there's the crop she'll never yield—so I'll not wield the flail
 elsewhere.

Look at me now ! Since she has left, beside my hearth I know
 I've grown
 More skinned than winter till the wind can make its bagpipes of
 my bones ;
 Here crickets talk, but that's poor song for one who sought the
 bark of seals—
 Here snipe with glint of light twist past—hell blast them, my last
 shot is thrown.

If you draw secrets from the wind, O little birds—that neatly
 leap
 From twig to twig—you've heard my cries, but these are secrets
 you must keep,
 Until in far flights you shall find her, dreaming of me at twilight
 time,—
 Then sing : though broken in my mind, I'll seek her in unquiet
 sleep.

SPINOZA

By Jack Lindsay

No man can act against his nature. Yet
 a pity stirred his hands, that such a host
 of men should live for evil; a regret
 that men should fret on light's tremendous coast
 in gnat-excitements. Then his thought again
 saw beyond petty whirrs, beyond the dark of pain——

saw gnat-like frenzy of entangled shapes,
 saw pain a fungus on the brightest growth,
 saw infinite power descend to trivial rapes,
 saw ugliness and beauty pledge their troth,
 saw all as real, all as much a part
 of cosmic life which clanged the cymbals of his heart.

Men strove for Justice or Injustice, fought
 to build a State, to bring a fancy true
 of God or Gods; and all the while they sought
 only to know their natures. Yes, they knew
 the truth, but feared it; feared the full release
 of resting on the earth, deep in organic peace.

Was it so awful to be still awhile,
 to ask no more than life? Men feared the pause.
 Their thoughts were gnats, a fretful net of guile,
 or sadness drifting back. They fled the cause,
 the whole, which, contemplated, soon resolved
 to powerful calm the forms so clashingly involved.

He called it God, because his mother spoke
 that name when softly in the night she bent
 with dark eyes wet above him, and he woke
 to scents of her dark hair. Too soon she went
 back rustling to her own forbidden bed;
 too soon, he wept, too soon, she sickened and was dead.

*God is exalted past all cruelty
and love. He works out his unending life.
All things are knitted.* Strange, that love could be
a figment bannered on these fields of strife,
the earth, the stars; and yet not strange. Her eyes
still wetly looked on him, glistening in dusky skies.

They all were dead or broken, put aside,
the men that he had loved, thrust underground.
Adrian, perished in his wilful pride,
his brave strong body shamed, then vilely drowned—
because he cried for truth and spoke too loud
against the gruesome God who soothed and stirred the crowd.

Jarig was drinking still by candle-light,
sogged in the drunkard's sense of aimless power,
a vague delirium that yet guessed aright,
far deeper than Descartes, though turning sour
at dawn. Good, Jarig! Drink! Your daze, my friend,
refutes philosophers, and priests too, in the end.

*Outside of God is nothing; yet we know
that sin and pain exist. Then tell me how
your God stands evil's test?* The breezes blow
along the Hout Gracht, and the topmost bough
rustles, like Hannah's silk. The limetrees wake
and murmur in the peace that fragrantly they make.

*All sin and error's necessary. All
in Nature is divine. Freewill's a word.*
The Kermes roared. He watched the peasants sprawl,
and Adrian's strong and joyous voice he heard.
They talked of Bruno, in the bookshop, while
grave Mayer smoked his pipe and gave a sudden smile.

The shouters in the Synagogue were stilled,
caught in the aftermath of utter hate.
The market-hours droned on. A girl had spilled
some milk across the steps. The day grew late.
His fellow-Jews were trembling in the spell
of wild Anathema that doomed his soul to hell.

" We execrate, we excommunicate
 Spinoza . . . cast him out . . . now may the ban
 of Joshua on Jericho, the weight
 of all Elijah's curses crush the man,
 and all the maledictions of the Book . . . "

The jealous God must speak, the Law that he forsook.

And Rembrandt standing wetted in the mud
 with golden light within his ruthless eyes . . .
 The oakgroves by the dunes, the tide in flood
 along the Vliet, the chimes of evening-skies . . .

Thank God his father died and never heard
 before the Torah-shrine the bestial cursing word.

" He flees from God like Adam at the Fall.
 The Wrath of God shall find him." Tenderly
 the heavens darkened at the swallow's call
 to green, at Rynsburg ; and he sighed to see
 the tree-tops flatten, while a thrush sang twice
 and then he warmed his milk and ate his sweetened rice.

Clara Maria and the summer-maze
 faded. The grinding-wheels now screeched no more.
 He coughed. So Hannah coughed. Her delicate ways
 bleached Clara's graces ; and the griefs she bore.
 Da Costa fought the world's great lie, and died ;
 he gave his dreaming heart to bless what he defied.

To fight in vain ! Yet fighting-men must fight.
 The face of Adrian came back, to blench,
 befouled in prison ; then, by lantern-light,
 flushed in the barn beside the dancing wench.
 God, Adrian, you died well . . . and Jarig blinks
 in that old airless room, and nods awhile, and drinks.

Yes, it was good to fight, but better still
 to have come to fighting's end. His driven race
 had fought, and out of stricken passionate will
 there broke his understanding : Hannah's face
 when, coughing done, she brooded, wholly free
 from anger or despair, serene with ecstasy.

Yes, luck to Jan de Witt, who'll doubtless fail.
 The pulpits blaze with rancour. Tricked, the crowd
 will rage with black religion and assail
 the man who works for freedom and is proud.
 Yes, luck to Jan de Witt, who cannot fail :
 he proudly follows out his nature's dangerous trail.

Spinoza left the past, the many men,
 crumbling in Time's dark acids ; left to-day,
 the urgencies that sometimes drove his pen.
 He rose up from the pallet where he lay,
 went to the window, breathed the evening-air,
 and watched below the dusk invade the garden-square.

There thirty-six small cottages stood round,
 and thirty-six old women sat and looked
 at dusk-fumes rising coolly from the ground,
 all silent at their windows, dinners cooked ;
 the gossip-time was ended, and the flowers,
 which day had tended well, now preened for lazy hours.

He knew each peasant-face beneath its cap
 of rearing white ; he knew the peasant-lives.
 He savoured there the strong and patient sap,
 the fullness held in those old sturdy wives
 who murmured like the bees amid the beds
 of rose and cabbage-lines, nodding their wise old heads.

He coughed. The damp had rasped his throat. He heard
 the uneasy blur of traffic, which went by.
 Slowly the evening sighed. The pensioners stirred
 and mused beneath the star-thatched sheltering sky.
 " The Institute of the Holy Spirit : " well,
 their faith went past their creed ; they knew but could not tell.

And he could tell. One pulse, it bowed his head
 and hurt his life, the desperate need to speak,
 to speak, ah God . . . and when the word was said,
 to have no answer ! Yet, why should he seek
 an answer save from the sustaining voice
 of cosmic God ? Ah God, he had a heavy choice.

The choice of joy ! Were he to choose again,
 he'd choose his way, he'd choose it, though the track
 had been a thousandfold more strewn with pain.
 On such a journey there's no turning-back.
 He'd gone with Nature, and, now death was near,
 he knew the power of peace which drives away all fear.

Joy of the unbared world ! The dance of stars
 that deepened in his eyes as now he gazed !
 The roses in the gloom, the window-bars
 closing the small clean kitchens—God be praised !
 Only the pang was left, the piteous ache
 to show the truth to men, to bless their souls awake.

And vanity returned, then died away,
 The deepening space of stars remained above ;
 the gloom of roses hid the busy day ;
 and Hannah's face came closer, grave with love.
*There's nothing perfect or imperfect. See
 the present moment shrined as clear eternity.*

*And in eternity all sin and error
 are pure things as the ebb and flow of seas,
 the movements of the stars. The abrupt terror
 flashed out, and he coughed blood. This knowledge frees
 the man who lives it. Beautiful the night,*
 and from the murmuring gloom a lingering bird took flight

as gently on the cracked old window-sill
 he laid his hands, and saw the heavens outspread,
 the whole necessity, the darkening will,
 life's garments and then life ungarmented—
 he saw it all, within himself he saw
 and knew his blood the fount of everlasting law.

VILLON ORDERS HIS TOMB IN THE FIRST-FLOOR
CHAPEL OF THE NUNS OF SAINT-AVOYE

After the French of François Villon

By Michael Scot

SET ye my sepulchre, above
In Saint-Avoye, where one and all
Who dream of poets sculpt with love,
May see my image. Roughly scrawl
My likeness on the whitewashed wall
If ink be not too dear in town!—
No need for tomb marmoreal:
Sure that would break the flooring down!

This epitaph, write round my bier:
Write large, and add no ornament;
Use coke, or coal, since ink is dear,
And might destroy the good cement
And whitewash. I'll be well content
If I am sepulchred with mirth.
May laughter bless my monument
For a gay comrade of the earth.

EPITAPH

*Here, in his sleep, 'twixt sky and sod
Lies one the spear of Love has sped:
A poor hedge scholar, Fool of God,
Called François Villon. All is said
No land he owned, alive or dead,
What goods he had he lost, or gave;
Stools, tables, creels, and likewise bread:
Here's rhyme, O lovers, for his grave!*

Ring then, for me, with sudden clangour,
Our noble bell of golden tongue:
No heart unmoved, no pulse of langour
But wakes to flame, when she is swung.
Oft, these dear realms, as bards have sung
Were saved by that far-pealing roar:
Ill rumours drown when she is rung
—Thunder itself, and noise of war.

A POET'S PROGRESS IN THE THEATRE

By Padraic Colum

FOR over a quarter of a century now the greatest poet writing in English has had under his control a theatre which he himself was instrumental in creating, a theatre which is not merely an adjunct to a writer's study, but is popular, and with an audience that has memories, traditions, national consciousness and that can react strongly to what is presented to it. A poet wishing to express himself in dramatic terms could hardly be more favourably placed. How has this particular poet profited by his enviable position? What progress has he made as a dramatist and how has his theatrical experience affected his non-dramatic poetry? The question is of the greatest interest and one turns eagerly to *The Collected Plays of W. B. Yeats* for an answer to it.

The opening play in the collection was produced before Yeats had a theatre under his control: it was revised afterwards; but fundamentally it is a play written by the poet while still outside the theatre and so it gives us a measure by which to estimate his theatrical progress. *The Countess Cathleen* is a play that with theatrical experience on the part of the poet could have been a classic. The opening scene is perfect: the legendary quality in the theme is rendered completely, hauntingly. Grave and kindly, the proper lady of a legend, Cathleen enters. The lines she speaks and the lines that answer hers must be remembered for their beauty and significance:—

God save all here. There is a certain house,
An old grey castle with a kitchen garden,
A cider orchard and a plot for flowers
Somewhere among those woods.

We know it, lady,
A place that's set among impassable walls
As though the world's trouble could not find it out.

These lines "situate" the action—it is in that Ireland where the medieval world has lasted until the seventeenth century, a world that is in the poems Yeats wrote before he discovered the world of heroic legend and the world of symbolism. I have dwelt on the first scene for the reason that the other scenes are not so telling. Indeed, there is very little left over from the first scene to keep up a play on. There is the love of the Countess Cathleen for Aleel the poet. This might have been used to give rise to a series of developing situations that would reinforce the main situation. It does not come near doing anything of the kind. Aleel is an alien in the theatre, being a lyrical poet's and not a dramatic poet's idea of a character: if Yeats had been accustomed to the theatre he would have known that a dramatist's characters have to be recognizable types; Aleel is not recognizable, being too indeterminate. In relation to Cathleen he has no project; he has only a private way of escape:—

I was asleep in my bed, and while I slept
My dream became a fire; and in the fire
One walked and he had birds about his head.

* * * *

And, lady, he bids me call you from those woods.
And you must bring but your old foster-mother,
And some few serving-men, and live in the hills
Among the sounds of music and the light
Of waters, till the evil days are done.

If Cathleen's lover, instead of being a neo-Pagan poet, had been a medieval type, a Knight, say (and a Knight would have been a recognizable type in the theatre), the play would have had a developing interest on this side. Then, too, the principle that Aleel represents is altogether out of place in the medieval conception that is back of the play: his Druidism is a myth within a myth—there is the medieval Christian conception and there is the Celtic pagan myth, and the audience have not enough credulity for both.

A play that impressed this outsetting dramatist and helped him towards a convention different from the one he had begun with, was the medieval morality, *Everyman*. It was a pity that he did not see *Everyman* before he gave *The Countess Cathleen* a

form in which there are several changes of scene and a lapse of time : played on a platform with a single scene as in *Everyman* and no time-intervals, *The Countess Cathleen* would have had an undissipated interest, would have been better gathered together. The peasants and merchants appearing on one side of the platform and Cathleen and her retainers on the other, without any shifts between such lines as :—

We know it, lady.

A place that's set among impassable walls
As though the world's trouble could not find it out.

and—

The Light of Lights

Looks always on the motive, not the deed.
The shadow of shadows on the deed alone.

The Countess Cathleen, to my mind, has the loveliest dramatic poetry that Yeats has written—such lines as :—

I heard a whisper from beyond the thunder.

and—

Bend down your faces, Oona and Aleel ;
I gaze upon them as the swallow gazes
Upon the nest under the eaves, before
She wanders the loud waters.

and—

The years like great black oxen tread the world,
And God the herdsman goads them on behind,
And I am broken by their passing feet.

The King's Threshold was the first poetic play produced after Yeats had actually worked in the theatre (the prose one act play *Kathleen-Ni-Holohan* was produced when he joined the group that was to establish the theatre for him). *Everyman* had suggested the form—a single processional action played without a break. There is an element in this play which I shall analyze later on which, in the original production, prevented an audience's complete sympathy going to the central character. The poet Seanchan has resolved to die by hunger. He brings his teaching back to the minds of his pupils who have come to ask him to

give up his hunger-protest. The poets, he has told them, hang images—

About the child-bed of the world that it
Looking upon those images might bear
Triumphant children.

Then, if these images were not shown—

The world that lacked them would be like a woman
That looking on the cloven lips of a hare
Brings forth a hare-lipped child.

The poet must not permit these images to be insulted in his person. So far the argument is convincing. But the answer made to one of the pupils amounts to causistry: he is asked :—

And yet a place at Council, near the King,
Is nothing of great moment, Seanchan.
How does so light a thing touch poetry?

The answer is—

At Candlemas you called this poetry
One of the fragile, mighty things of God,
That die at an insult.

The prestige of poetry is bound up with its privileges at Court—

Upon that day he spoke about the Court
And called it the first comely child of the world,
And said that all that was insulted there
The world insulted, for the Courtly life
Is the world's model.

This is rationalization, and not a very good one, of the action of a man who is going to starve himself and make a disturbance in the state because bishops, soldiers and men of law do not believe that a poet is entitled to a place at the King's council. Nobody really believes that the existence of poetry depends upon its prestige at Court. This is a fantastic element, an element that often comes into Yeats' plays and detracts from the audience's complete sympathy: by fantastic I mean the intrusion of the dramatist's private notions.

Yeats foreshadowed in Seanchan's situation the heroic defiance of Terence MacSwiney. Fourteen years after he had produced this play he witnessed a life flicker to martyrdom through hunger. And witnessing this his vision became uplifted and solemn. He perceived that what Seanchan was striving for was something more than the restoration of an ancient right. It was to make obsolete for ever a whole array of ancient wrongs. As it was first produced the play ended with Seanchan winning over the King and being brought back to the Council Table to a fanfare of trumpets. But a poet in so triumphant a role is not a sympathetic personage; the play that had such an ending was not poignant. But in *The King's Threshold* as given in this collection Seanchan dies, and his death gives rise to solemn poetry—

When I and these are dead
We should be carried to some windy hill
To be there uncovered face awhile
That mankind and the leper there may know
Dead faces laugh.

* * * *

Not what it leaves behind it in the light
But what it carries with it to the dark
Exalts the soul; nor song nor trumpet-blast
Can call up races from this worsening world
To mend the wrong and mar the solitude
Of that great shade we follow to his tomb.

This solemn end makes everything right in the play. We know Seanchan now, not as a man striving for some rational purpose, but as an ungovernable man whose purpose is hidden from himself: he is the possessor of some unrevealed testament. His arguments are now seen to be really rationalizations; they do not touch the inner, unexpressed conviction of the man. And that strange and fantastical scene with the cripples and the declamation about the leper and leprosy comes to be part of the character of that unaccountable personage, Seanchan.

The verse of *The King's Threshold* has strident music—the sound of trumpets as compared with sound of harps which is the music of *The Countess Cathleen*. The opening speech is frankly

an oration and its note is in all the other speeches—even in the speeches of the poet and his sweetheart—

My dove of the woods! I was about to curse you.
It was a frenzy. I'll unsay it all.
But you must go away.

Let me be near you.
I will obey like any married wife.
Let me lie before your feet.

The poet has now got the rhythm of actual speech into his verse—a speech to be declaimed as the speech of *The Countess Cathleen* is to be chanted.

To read *The Hour Glass* with the first version of it in memory is to realize how essential it is for the dramatic poet to have such a workshop as a theatre under his control. In its original form *The Hour Glass* was an elementary kind of drama; it was in prose, in the convention of a morality, and it lacked conflict and contrast. In the course of several productions this play was developed into something with contrast and character, something intellectual, something belonging to the poet's own world. The play is now mainly in verse, and is more elaborate, on a higher level of creation than the first version. The Wise Man who before had no particular individuality, is now a Yeatsian Wise Man, one who is startled back into a conviction that must have been in him originally, the conviction that the phenomenal world is no more than a reflection of the real world. In this premonition of this coming conviction there is an intellectual fantasy that is thoroughly Yeatsian—

Twice have I dreamed it in a morning dream,
Now nothing serves my pupils but to come
With a light thought. Reason is growing dim;
A moment more and Frenzy will beat his drum
And laugh aloud and scream;
And I must dance in the dream.
No, no, but it is like a hawk, a hawk of the air,
It has swooped down—and this swoop makes the third—
And what can I, but tremble like a bird?

But if he has profited by his franchise of the theatre, it has to be said too, that Yeats has occasionally misused that franchise. There is the case of *The Shadowy Waters*. Originally this was a beautiful and dramatically sustained piece of poetry, capable of being delivered as a dramatic recital. Well, the poet has changed

all that. He attempted to make theatrically effective a conception that might have been embodied in a Mallarméan dialogue. The result is that everything becomes muddled. Instead of the lovely dramatic poem we have in *The Shadowy Waters* of the present volume prose and verse speeches that seem plagiarisms from some Abbey Theatre play.

SECOND SAILOR : It's a bad thing, age to be coming on me,
and I not to get the chance of doing a
robbery that would enable me to live
quiet and honest to the end of my
lifetime.

* * * *

FORGAEL	My grief !
DECTORA	Have I not loved you for a thousand years ?
FORGAEL	I never have been golden-armed Iollan.
DECTORA	I do not understand. I know your face Better than my own hands.
FORGAEL	I have deceived you. Out of all reckoning.
DECTORA	Is it not true That you were born a thousand years ago In islands where the children of Angus wind In happy dances under a windy moon And that you'll bring me there ?
FORGAEL	I have deceived you ; I have deceived you utterly.

I can imagine some young writer sending this to the Directors of the Abbey Theatre in the fond belief that he was writing as well as the Synge of *The Playboy of the Western World* in collaboration with the Yeats of *The Wind Amongst the Reeds*.

Nor can I praise the play that follows, *Deirdre*. The verse has high excellence : indeed it is a long way back to the time when verse as fine as this was spoken on the stage :—

Such words and fears
Wrong this old man who's pledged his word to us.
We must not speak or think as women do,
That when the house is all a-bed sit up
Marking among the ashes with a stick
Till they are terrified. Being what we are
We must meet all things with an equal mind.

The lyric that makes a chorus for this play is amongst the greatest of Yeats' lyrical poems. But, to me, *Deirdre* is exasperating. One can do almost anything with an heroic legend that one is treating for a modern audience : but one thing one must not do, and that is to make the people in it undignified. In *Deirdre* there is not one character that has real dignity : Conchubar is depraved into treachery by senile lust ; Fergus is a credulous babbler ; the singing-women are out of a green-room ; Deirdre has the self-consciousness of a prima-donna ; Naoise is a pure fool. These statements call for some backing-up, and, unfortunately, it is easy to give them that. Deirdre's first words in the play are :—

Silence your music, though I thank you for it ;
But the wind's blown upon my hair, and I
Must set the jewels on my neck and head
For one that's coming.

When she would get Naoise out of the trap they have been led into she pretends that her object is to captivate Conchubar—

Look at my face where the leaf raddled it
And at these rubies on my hair and breast.
It was for him, to stir him to desire,
I put on beauty ; yes, for Conchubar.

What frenzy put the words into your mouth ?

No frenzy, for what need is there for frenzy
To change what shifts with every change of wind,
Or else there is no truth in men's old sayings ?
Was I not born a woman ?

Naoise has been Deirdre's husband for nine years ; he would know, of course, that what she was saying was not true ; she would know that he would know it, and so would not say anything of the kind. After this Naoise allows himself to be taken in a net (could there be anything less heroic than the spectacle of a man in a net, mouthing as Naoise mouths before he is killed ?) Deirdre wants to kill herself on Naoise's body, and to get the chance of doing this makes up to the old king. But she is very conscious

of the situation and is insistent that posterity hear about her taking-off—

Women, if I die
 If Naoise die this night, how will you praise ?
 What word seek out ? for that will stand to you ;
 For being but dead we shall have many friends.
 All through your wanderings, the doors of kings
 Shall be thrown wider open, the poor man's hearth
 Heaped with new turf, because you are wearing this
 To show that you have Deirdre's story right.

Certainly the self-regarding phase which Yeats is prone to fall into when he is not being carried away by another sort of interest, is too evident in *Deirdre*.

There is a good deal of this self-regarding phase in *On Baile's Strand*, but his play about Conchubar and Cuchulain has vitality, a vitality that seems over-stimulated in passages but is always to be felt. The weakness of the play comes from that fantasy which Yeats is often betrayed into. Cuchulain fights a young man who turns out to be his son—fights him and slays him. But he does not want to fight him—he likes him, the boy reminds him of a woman he loved, and he would like to have him for a comrade. And what reverses this feeling ? “Some witch is floating in the air above,” Conchubar declares, and then Cuchulain :—

Yes, witchcraft ! witchcraft ! Witches of the air !
 Why did you do it ? Who was it set you to the work ?
 Out, out, I say, for now it's sword on sword.

And on this piece of senselessness Cuchulain and the young man whose appearance has so appealed to him go out to do battle.

But this defect comes in a play that impresses one through its queer consistency. *On Baile's Strand* is a wrangle from beginning to end : the Fool and the Blind Man who are the shadows of Cuchulain and Conchubar wrangle, Cuchulain and Conchubar wrangle, the Young Man and Cuchulain wrangle ; Cuchulain himself is so unstable that one feels he has a perpetual wrangle with himself. The wrangle goes on after the death of the Young Man for the Fool and the Blind Man resume theirs. The play has the impressiveness of a thing that has inherent character. In Yeats' development as a writer of a high kind of poetic eloquence

this play is the peak, above *The King's Threshold*. The exchanges between Cuchulain and Conchubar, between Cuchulain and the Young Man are magnificent pieces of tirade :—

Are you so changed,
Or have I grown more dangerous of late ?
But that's not it. I understand it all.
It's you that have changed. You've wives and children now,
And for that reason cannot follow one
That lives like a bird's flight from tree to tree—
It's time the years put water in my blood
And drowned the wildness of it, for all's changed,
But that unchanged—I'll take what oath you will :
The moon, the sun, the water, light, or air,
I do not care how binding.

* * * *

For he that's in the sun begot this body
Upon a mortal woman, and I have heard tell
It seemed as if he had outrun the moon
That he must follow always through waste heaven,
He loved so happily. He'll be but slow
To break a tree that was so sweetly planted.
Let's see that arm. I'll see it if I choose.
That arm had a good father and a good mother,
But it is not like this.

The characters in *On Baile's Strand* have not heroic stature. Is Yeats, then, not capable of creating in the heroic ? The answer to that is in another out of his Cuchulain cycle, it is in *The Green Helmet*.

This play is one of Yeats' complete dramatic successes : it has not any deliberateness, intentionality, self-consciousness ; it has spontaneity that goes well with high and heroic exploit. The heady verse admirably conveys this. This verse is a real innovation, rhymed verse in ballad-metre through which the characters can be humorous and spirited. Again Cuchulain is the centre of the play ; with him are his peers Laegaire and Conall. These heroes have real heroic stature ; they have humour, bravery and a fantasy that is proper to them. And unlike the people in *Deirdre*, the people in *On Baile's Strand*, they convince us that they are Irish. Indeed, the liveliness of the Irish heroic saga has

never been better brought out than in this impetuous and humorous play which at once satirizes Irish tribalism and celebrates the heroism which often transcends that tribalism. The helmet of the title is to be given to the hero who will redeem the honour of the land by laying down his own head for the Red Man to sweep off. Cuchulain of all the heroes is the one who will take the helmet up on the Red Man's terms. But the Red Man does not take his head off; he designates him Champion of the land, and the words he speaks to him ring like an heroic dedication :—

I have not come for your hurt. I'm the Rector of the land
And with my spitting cat-heads, my frienzied moon-bred band,
Age after age I sift it, and choose for its championship
The man who hits my fancy.

And I choose the laughing lip
That shall not turn from laughing, whatever rise or fall;
The heart that grows no bitterer although betrayed by all;
The hand that loves to scatter; the life like a gambler's throw;
And these things I make prosper, till a day come that I know
When heart and mind shall darken that the weak may end
the strong,

And the long-remembering harpers have matter for a song.

In *The King's Threshold* the end is made solemn by the influence of the death of Terence MacSwiney; in *The Green Helmet* a hero is projected who afterwards appeared as Michael Collins.

With the production of *The Green Helmet* a period in Yeats' career in the theatre came to a close: up to this his technique had envisaged the normal stage with players having normal equipment. Afterwards he brings in lyricism, masks, the dance. But before dealing with this development there are two prose plays to be mentioned: *The Unicorn from the Stars* and *The Player Queen*.

These two plays display the symbolism of the Unicorn. *The Unicorn from the Stars* is a re-incarnation of an earlier play, *Where there is Nothing*, and it has no distinctiveness: indeed it might have been written by some of the other Abbey dramatists. But *The Player Queen* is Yeatsian and it is good theatre; it has spontaneity, flow, high spirits, and with its combination of poetry, intellectual conception, and fantasy, it is a new kind of comedy. At the opposite pole from *The Countess*

Cathleen it yet reminds us of that first play : It might take place in a town in Cathleen's territory and the Queen in it might be some relation of the Countess's. There is a poet in this play, too, and he has become a dramatist. *The Player Queen*, in short, is by the author of *The Countess Cathleen* who has now made himself into a writer of comedy ; the Countess Cathleen's world is here, but viewed by a poet who has become older, more gleeful, more worldly.

The plays of the new period, Plays for Dancers, are for some place less formal than the theatre, a drawing-room or a studio. The dramatist no longer aims at creating and developing a dramatic situation : these plays are evocative rather than dramatic, calling up some high, remote mood. An effect of loneliness which could not be obtained on the stage of the regular theatre is in the Plays for Dancers given in the volume of Collected Poems. The eye as well as the ear has part in evoking the mood :—

I call to the eye of the mind
A well long choked up and dry,
And boughs long stripped by the wind.

These plays belong to a new dramatic mode. But it is a dramatic mode that is not likely to be developed ; it is personal, being essentially Yeatsian in all its elements.

The effect of loneliness which is in the Plays for Dancers given in the volume of Collected Plays is not so felt in a play of the same mode which is not with the Collected Plays—*The King of the Great Clock Tower*. There is something genial in this play. As I read it I speculate on how Yeats' latest work differs from his early and middle work and what he has put into it that makes it so much richer, so much more striking than the work he did twenty-five and forty years ago. His later work becomes like a myth. And this conclusion comes to me with an image from a physicist I had been reading: the sound that comes from a fire or a waterfall, the physicist had informed me, is made up of waves of all lengths mixed together unlike the waves of definite lengths that come from an instrument. This new poetry of Yeats seems to have all wave-lengths in it. And this is to say that it has more correspondence with myth than with anything said or sung.

Myth, unlike a legend or tale, has imaginative waves of all lengths mixed up in it, making a confusion that is like the sound of a fire or a waterfall. Very few poets have been able to give us this disturbing sense of all sorts of wave-lengths set going : perhaps Blake does it oftener than anyone else :—

Hear the voice of the Bard
Who present, past and future sees ;
Whose ears have heard
The holy Word
That walked amongst the ancient trees.

A like feeling, the feeling as of a myth, comes from *The King of the Great Clock Tower* and from the lyrics sung in it, and perhaps the best way of stating the poet's progress is to say that he has become a creator and chanter of myths :—

I cannot face that emblem of the moon,
Nor eyelids that the unmixed heavens dart,
Nor stand upon my feet, so great a fright
Descends upon my savage, sunlit heart—
What can she lack whose image is the moon ?

But desecration and the lover's night !

These plays depart more and more from the formal dramatic pattern ; they become ritual rather than drama ; even the mood that they evoke becomes less and less distinct. More and more they seem to be written for some magnificent lyric that gets itself uttered by one of the players. And so the poet works back through the drama to the lyric. But now it is a different lyric from the one he was writing when he turned to drama so that he might gain "a more manful energy." Great, indeed, is the difference between—

That is no country for old men. The young
In one another's arms, birds in the trees,
—Those dying generations—at their song.

and—

Who will go drive with Fergus now
And pierce the dim wood's woven shade ?

The wavering rhythm has been superseded by a plainness that is at once the plainness of speech and the plainness of classical

poetry. There is a succession of pieces that have this plainness : the core of them is meditation, but the form given them is always dramatic.

At midnight on the Emperor's pavement flit
Flames that no faggot feeds, nor steel has lit,
Nor storm disturbs, flames begotten of flame,
Where blood-begotten spirits come
Of all complexities of fury leave,
Dying into a dance,
An agony of trance,
An agony of flame that cannot singe a sleeve.

This plainness of statement, this mood of drama are consequent on writing for an audience, of writing for the theatre ; an increment from his work in the theatre it has become a permanent part of Yeats' poetry. With such magnificent lyrics as a by-product and with such plays as *The Hour Glass*, *The King's Threshold*, *On Baile's Strand*, *The Green Helmet*, *The Hawk's Well*, *The Only Jealousy of Emer*, *The Player Queen*, as product there is cause for rejoicing that this poet was able to take possession of a theatre. These plays represent the greatest amount of dramatic poetry that has been given the English-speaking world since the close of the Elizabethian age. Yeats has brought poetry into the theatre again—not that lyrical poetry which perishes in the attempt to acclimatise itself to the theatre, not rhetoric passing itself off as poetry, but poetry arising out of character and situation.

But there is a great difference between this poetry and the ancient poetry for the Theatre : in giving us his work in unlike translations of Sophocles, Yeats lets us see where the difference lies. The ancient poetry was steeped in religion, was constantly referring to pieties ; in the plays in this collection there is no religion, there are no pieties. The contrast makes us see how much significance is left out of even the finest of modern dramatic productions.

A DEUCE O' JACKS

By F. R. Higgins

To Maurice MacGonegal, R.H.A.

CHARACTERS

LUKE GAFFNEY
HAREFOOT MIKE
KNACKER BYRNE
THE NOBBLER
YOCKLE BROUGH
GOLDEN MAGGIE

JANGLERS DEEGAN
A TIN WHISTLE PLAYER
PHAROAH'S DAUGHTER
JEZEBEL
MICHAEL MORAN
A PRIEST

Barefooted Gowdgers, Gutties, Bowzies, and Cornerboys with their Women.

IMPORTANT.—All the characters speak in the drawling syllabic accent of the Dublin Streets.

SCENE : *The loft above a Knacker's yard in the Liberties of Dublin.*

Time : about 1840.

This production is not a play in the conventional structure—it is much more and a lot less. Primarily a genre painting, one darkened with age, it presents a sombre background to the first glimpse until with the increasing gesture and dance of its mellow figures—the characters—it becomes a succession of moving pictures ; only to end itself in the grotesqueness of its first sombre effect and so colour as well as sound and speech—complete the rhythmic curve. Indeed to get a true perspective the production—an attempt to co-ordinate the primal elements of the theatre—should be seen a few times and from a distance !

With the rise of the curtain the proscenium is the frame of this painting ; the stage is pitch dark ; but through a skylight in the rafters of the low sloping roof a green beam of moonlight falls solely upon a straw bed—shook down on the floor—to the extreme right. From that light the loft appears rich in cobwebs, rags, and phantastic shadows. The narrow space between the bed and the right wall is occupied by an old wooden bin, that once contained fodder for horses. On top of the bin gleams are squinting from porter bottles and metal utensils. Two odd-sized barrels prop the head of the bed in which is seen the greenish-grey face of a man—LUKE—as he half sits up among old horse skins and straw. Except for its frequent scratching there is silence. A noise, as of a latch being lifted, is heard. LUKE hurriedly lies down and groans.

At the back, to the extreme left, a door slowly opens ; the sea-blue moonlit roofs are seen outside, as HAREFOOT MIKE cautiously enters, from the ladder stairs, outside ; he closes the door, limps down the three steps from the door and goes very slowly towards the bed.

LUKE (*groaning*) :

By the gap in the step that's Harefoot Mike. . . . Eh,
Grass won't grow under yewer feet. (*Kicks in the straw ;*
MIKE hesitates.)

What ? scared by a man's dying kick !
Come over here an' stop your gammin', Harefoot ;
'Twasnt from a fall o' snow that I came to tell
The track o' yer step, ya night waddler, ya !

(*MIKE slowly advances until his face is white-washed in the moon's ray. Although looking angular and ghoulish he speaks timidly.*)

MIKE : What, Zozimus ?

LUKE : Say, has Death queered the look o' me gob ?

MIKE : Ah, by no great shakes ;
Just the brotherly look o' a blind man starin' Death in
the face.

LUKE (*with forced coughing*) : Well, tip me a swig, from that mug.
(*Points to utensils on top of bin.*)

MIKE (*limps past bed to bin while LUKE forcibly coughs*) : Fax, ya
tuk bad quick ?

LUKE : Yes, just after me sup . . . (*coughing*).

MIKE : Hol' yewer breath hard.

LUKE (*with effort*) : O, I'm snuffed, if it slips . . .
Hurry ! (*MIKE examines various utensils ; LUKE grows impatient.*) Can't ya put yer paw on it ?

MIKE : Whist, Zozimus ! Don't waste yewer wind for a tick.

LUKE (*after a short silence*) : Ah, sufferin' Job ; it's guzzling me swig
Yous are !

MIKE : What, heav'ns, no ! I'm just beseechin' Saint Anthony

LUKE : The mug with the dinge on its lip ! (*MIKE crashes a mug to*
the floor) : Let me up, let me up.

(*LUKE tries to get out of bed ; MIKE holds him back.*)

Blind though I am, I've more sight with me nose than you've
With yer pig's eyes that's apt to see the wind . . . I sniff
Stiff malt ! I'll collar it.

MIKE (*slowly*) : Ya can't Zozimus ; it's spilt.
(*LUKE falls back in bed and groans.*)

Zozimus, death wasn't long grapplin' ya b'th' throttle ;
After all the holy poetries ya made up !—

Yewer " Blessed Mary o' Agypt " ; " Chiz'ler Moses "

An' " Fareo's Daughter " ; yewer " Lovely Saint Jezebel."

LUKE (*interrupting*) : May your buck teeth choke you !

MIKE : Aw, God in Heaven ;

An' I only here for th' good o' yewer grey soul.

LUKE : Ah, is it you ? Legging me up the backstairs to heaven.

MIKE : Yis, an' who'd be better. Me beads in yewer hands,
Zozimus,

With a hank o' green rushes—plucked from a holy well—
Greased an' glimmin' in place o' yewer withered eyes.

LUKE : Mine ? Hell

Parch yer sliddery voice.

MIKE : I'm not tawin' ya off, Zozimus,
I'm not ; but 'twould do a priest good to see ya laid out
Like a pure christian.

LUKE : Me ? Laid out ? Led astray be Death ?
Get out o' me light ; I feel yewer twisted shadow
Warping me gob. Get out, ye craw thumper !

MIKE : Me ?

LUKE : Yes ; or maybe I'll chisel yerself to wash me old corpse.

MIKE : I'm only here at th' beck o' Golden Maggie.

LUKE : And what call has that strip to tip yours the wind o' me
wake ?

MIKE : Well, sez she to me, " I'm scarified finding old Zozimus
Up in his wad an' th' creature on his last spit."

LUKE : H'm, belling the news to a clap-trap !

MIKE : But, then she flitted,
Quiet as a lamplighter, into Moss Alley,
(*sarcastically*) : An' th' neck o' yewer shebeen jar cocked
out o' her shawl.

LUKE : With treats for me wakers—yes, me fellow meditators—
(*bitterly*) : But not with a sup for a gowdger ?

MIKE : Who's th' gowdger ?

LUKE (*coughing*) : Not even the old wan's rinsings from me corpse
To save yer skin !

MIKE : Keep yer divil's spit for th' whelps
Who'll be cartin' (*steps are heard on ladder outside*) yewer
carcase box to Bully's Acre.

LUKE (*groaning as door opens and KNACKER BYRNE enters*) :
Ah, I can't gab . . . O, the hinges of me tongue
Are goin' stiff . . . I'm losin' the kick.

(*Turns away ; and BYRNE, in silence stands inside half open door.*)

MIKE (*unseen in darkness, loudly whispers*): Knacker, Knacker
Byrne.

BYRNE (*cautiously*): Who's that?

MIKE: Ssh! Mike . . . Harefoot Mike.

BYRNE: Where are yous, at all?

MIKE: Ssh!

BYRNE (*closing the door as the stage grows brighter*):

Yewer in good keepin' anyways.

Has he snuffed it yet? (*comes forward.*)

MIKE (*softly*): He's lyin' there in th' wad;

Th' very divil's standin' up straight in him.

BYRNE: I'm told a spasm floored him outside, a jiffy

Agoo (*moves to bed*): and now he's peggin' out fast.

MIKE: Aw, but with

More scrappin' in him than in all th' Meath Militia.

(BYRNE'S head looks into the moonlight over the bed.)

For Jaber's sake, don't gawk at th' ol' martyr.

LUKE (*lying with his back to BYRNE*): Who's gawkin'

At me and I making out my epitaph.

BYRNE (*affectionately*): Aw, yeh old skin; yewer th' sly wan,
tryin' to give us

The slip and no wan about.

LUKE (*turns to BYRNE*): Knacker; I'm only . . .

Half in it; here's Harefoot, blidderin' his Glasnevin
wheeze

Into me lug; pinching the clergy's fat job;

Tapeing me stretch; and then, holy Jezebel,

To think o' him skiting me one last swig o' drink

Over the thirsty floor.

BYRNE: That doesn't signify!

To-night, the next night or whenever yewer bello's goes flat

We'll deal yous a glorious deck off. So . . . no snuffin' out

On th' nod.

LUKE: I never renagued my pledge; did I, men?

BYRNE: Never, Zozimus.

LUKE: Or bested the boys?

BYRNE: Never.

LUKE (*rising up in bed*): Well, then may me corpse give yez all
a wild night

To-night.

MIKE : Holy Saint Michan's preserve us.

BYRNE : Yewer a buck o' th' best ! The pity yous won't be in it Yourself.

LUKE (*boisterously*) : And who'll be best man throughout me own wake

But meself. Yous'll see me skip off like a game cock without

The lost of a feather . . . and listen ! I've shuffled the boys the tip !

They're out now scrounging the dibs for our drink.

BYRNE : God spare yer

Sweet breath ; for a drink we'll hoosh ya to heaven.

MIKE : Yez'll what ?

(*With pious gestures.*)

His soul to go like a bladder, bloated with porter !

Yer red rotten.

BYRNE (*in fighting attitude*) : Who's ? ya spent herrin' !

LUKE : Don't mind the bowzie ;

(*Animately speaks in time to a melodeon tune which is played away in the distance*)

For I've sent for the gutties of Golden Lane,

The Lavender men from Cow Parlour,

An' th' bold coal heavers who'll leave their pints

On th' counters of Windy Arbour ;

While the shoes that's covered, near Pidgeon House Fort,

With fish-scales bigger than tanners,

Can dance with the shawlies from Thunderbolt Court—

BYRNE (*towards MIKE*) : An' to hell wit' yer Prodistant manners !

MIKE : Well, God forgive yez ; an' you there Zozimus

Lookin' inta th' clay face o' death.

LUKE : Ah, shut

Yewer clapper. (*Lies down.*)

BYRNE : Jabers, we'll knock blazes out o' th' night.

MIKE : Ya, larapin' like yella jaundered sailors

In a North Wall bunk.

BYRNE (*as steps are heard coming up the outside ladder*) : Ssh !

MIKE : (*after listening for a moment*) : An' here's yer musicianer With his foreign squeegee.

BYRNE : I'll give ya a stuff in th' craw.

LUKE (*coughing*): Ah, wind his bladder.

(*Coughing forcibly as door opens:*
NOBBLER and YOCKLE BROUGH
enter sinisterly).

YOCKLE (*bantering*): An' so ya can see the wake's
Beginnin' to gather; what Nobbler?

NOBBLER (*as both men go towards the bed*): Soon and sudden.

BYRNE:

Why wouldn't we gather an' give th' oul' buck a thunderin'
Fine send off.

YOCKLE: The'll be nothin' fine about it;

NOBBLER: It's wet we're wantin'.

LUKE: Well, you'd better be dishin'
It quick! Come here.

(BYRNE, YOCKLE and NOBBLER *with*
heads ghastly in the moon's rays
stand around the bed.)

YOCKLE: Come over here, Harefoot.

(*MIKE joins the group.*)

LUKE: Now don't breathe a budge. Do you hear that hopitty
noise?

(*A tense silence.*)

Ssh! listen! (*slowly*) . . . That's oul' death rattling his
dice in me throttle.

MIKE (*crossing himself as he backs away from group*): O, holy
Saint Larry O'Toole.

BYRNE (*to LUKE*): Houl' on a tick.

LUKE: For no more than a toss or two.

MIKE (*from the darkness*): " . . . an' in th' hour.
O' our death . . . "

YOCKLE (*quickly*): Here, Harefoot, go'ut an' collar Maggie
With the drink.

BYRNE (*rapidly*): No, th' musicianer.

(*MIKE moves to door.*)

LUKE (*sarcastically*): Who'll bail him with the drink.

(*MIKE fully opens door, from which a clear passage of golden light cuts across the stage; the subsequent action takes place between this light and the green ray from the skylight.*)

MIKE : Ah, have a grain o' sense ; yewer half dead ; I'll off
An' callar wan o' the clergy for ya.

NOBBLER (*bounding towards him*) : You'll what ?

MIKE : I'll finger a prayer for him in Saint Adam an' Eve's.

LUKE : If ya spoil me wake, I'll grease me knife in yer tripes.

MIKE (*as NOBBLER bars his way*) : For pity sake let me clear
anyways, I couldn't

Bare watch a man breath his last.

YOCKLE : Let out th' oul' funk.

(*Exit.*)

NOBBLER (*calling after MIKE*) : Eh, tell Janglers Deegan come up.
(*Returns leaving door opened.*)

He'll chuck us a pull

O' a tune.

BYRNE : His new fangled squeegee is a dandy.

LUKE (*interrupting*) :

Ah, for Jaber's sake, give us a swig. I'm drought
Itself.

(*As he speaks YOCKLE takes a large bottle from the scalloped
tail of his long top coat.*)

With all the blab, I've got a throat

Roarin' red like a lime kiln. (*He drinks.*)

NOBBLER : Now, d'ya think . . .

YOCKLE (*interrupting*) : Thinkin' bad wit !

NOBBLER : Think will Harefoot split

To the black lads ?

BYRNE : He's apt to.

YOCKLE : An' they dead struck against wakes.

LUKE (*regaining his breath after a long drink*) : Here, ya horse-
skinner, perish that sup. (*As KNACKER drinks.*)

That's the blessed wet

To give yous th' pair o' wings.

NOBBLER (*awaiting for bottle*) : Whoe, Knacker ; lay off.

YOCKLE : An' if Maggie's bunged a hole in th' porter ?

BYRNE (*handing bottle to NOBBLER*) : That's flamin'.

LUKE : While blidderin' an' gosterin' with me body-snatchers.

BYRNE : Who's ?

YOCKLE : Golden Maggie

NOBBLER (*drinks*) : Yous'll twig her top-heavy with barley.

LUKE (*groaning*) : Knacker ! will yous slip out an' bundle her here ?

BYRNE : Like whipt lightnin'.

YOCKLE (*as KNACKER goes out*) : Keep steady th' jar ; it's lippin' full.

(YOCKLE looks out after BYRNE. LUKE suddenly sits upright in bed ; and turning towards NOBBLER.)

LUKE : Hold, bucko, don't drown yourself.

(*Loudly as NOBBLER lowers the bottle.*)

Where's my share of th' takings ?

Here ! Where's that cash yer after bilkin' abroad ?

YOCKLE (*returning from door*) : Eh, Luke, harness yer tongue. Ya sound like throwin' in yer hand.

LUKE : Me hand be jiggered. I'm to lie stock still, Yis, blind sober, watching yer Adam's apple go hopping In gulps o' drink, an' I with me throat cut with thirst ! Do yer think I'm mutton ?

NOBBLER : Yewer meant to be.

LUKE (*roaring*) : Well, I'll
(*leaping out of bed, dressed in shirt, knee breeches, blue socks and boots.*)

Let yez see. (*rushes at NOBBLER.*)

YOCKLE (*goes between them*) : Yewer a deuce o' Jacks. D' ya' wanta be milled ?

LUKE (*trying to reach NOBBLER's coat*) : His body-coat's lined with drink.

NOBBLER (*pushing him off*) : Who're ya clawin'.

LUKE (*pushing YOCKLE backwards in attempting to seize NOBBLER*) : If I get my gripes on yer juggler, I'll quench yer flamin' Soul.

YOCKLE : Can't ya chuck him his blidderin' bottle.

NOBBLER : I'll see

His brain-box lobby first.

LUKE : Ya would, would ya ?

YOCKLE (*grips both in sudden anger*) : On me bible oath, I'll swing for th' two o' yez.

(*quietly*) : Now, easy on, Nobbler ; hand him out th' bottle.

NOBBLER (*taking a bottle from his coat tails*) : There, Yockle.

YOCKLE (*handing over the bottle*) : Now, Luke ; hop inta th' wad before yer copped.

LUKE (*with assumed dignity*) : O, not at all, at all, fake somebody else

To do your play-acting now.

(Removes the wig in which he impersonates MICHAEL MORAN—the one and only Zozimus.)

YOCKLE (*commanding*) : Gwan there ; quit yer coddin'.

LUKE : Don't bam boozle me. I'm done with this gammin' game.

YOCKLE : Yer what. Ay . . . chuck that or as surely as yewer The dead spit o' Zozimus, I'll have ya burried alive. A' b' those yous'll fool to yer wake.

LUKE : That'll be yer hangin'.
Yous ? Coddin' th' boys to me wake ! But I'll blow th' gaff

On yous ; an' ye'll lep from yer skins as soon as they're here.

YOCKLE (*shrewdly*) : An' th' big wigs o' Green Street an' dandies from Gloucester Diamond . . .

LUKE (*most dignified*) : What of them ?

YOCKLE : After neckin' their dibs on th' bleat
(*mimicing*) : O' plantin' the meat o' oul' Zozimus, mister.
(YOCKLE and NOBBLER break into loud laughter.)

LUKE : Ya pair
O' pauper-house cheats . . . an' where's me skelp o' th gosh ?

YOCKLE (*good-humouredly*) : Here it is, ya oul' fire flint.
(Hands a fistful of coins from his pocket to LUKE.)

LUKE (*astonished*) : What ! Ya've netted
A queer scale o' sunfish to-night ; a shoal o' gold fish
In a jug of pinkeens ; eh, Nobbler ?

NOBBLER : Ah, yer word's near ya.

YOCKLE (*raising his bottle*) : Well, gents, here's to success . . .

LUKE : In little yella mouthfuls.
(YOCKLE and LUKE drink from their bottles.)

NOBBLER : An' may yez have a hearty death to-night,
Zozimus ! (*he drinks.*)

LUKE : Hearty's th' word for it. Listen
 (Rattling coins in his pocket.)
 More brightness hops now in me pocket than in th'
 pool
 O' th' Salmon Leap! Say, lad? *(gives YOCKLE a*
 friendly blow.) But what's that to th' weirs
 O' porter we'll have cascadin' down our gullets
 Th' live long night.

YOCKLE: For Jaber's sake, get into th' straw;
Unless ya fake us th' sign o' a wake, we've no
God's right to th' prog. Nobbler, have a squint out.
(NOBBLER *looks from door.*) Luke, may Heaven
Be yer bed but if yous don't let on t' b' Zozimus
We'll be slit when th' goms get a wink o' our trick.

LUKE (*getting glib*): Look, Yockle!
 Ya've seen me act, ya know what I can do : (*striking
 an attitude*)
 I'll play such a deadly part this night, that ya won't
 Know me from a half-cast tombstone of scarce a word.
 (YOCKLE *shrugs in doubt.*)

What, I bet ya, I'll even ring tears from an undertaker.
YOCKLE: Come on (*catches LUKE*) or I'll biff ya. (*Pushes him
towards bed.*)

LUKE: Wait! Have I got it?
(Feels his coat, then takes bottle from pocket.)

NOBBLER (*excitedly*) : Steps !

YOCKLE: Quick! no tongue-dribblin' or ya'll be spificated!

LUKE (*placing bottle between barrels at head of bed*): Now I'll say less than a young cockerel skewered up in Moore Street.

(As he gets into the bed.)

NOBBLER: Here's Golden Maggie; she's anchored to Knacker.

LUKE (as YOCKLE fixes him in bed): Say, Yock Brough!
Is there any fear of oul' Zoze' tumblin' on us
An' me in his wad!

YOCKLE : Not a fear !

LUKE : An' can we perish

His drink in peace ?

YOCKLE : Aw, in peace; I've got him well caged
 An' hooded for th' night.

NOBBLER (*signs and loudly whispers*): The're comin' up!

LUKE: An' is he well tied?

YOCKLE: Tied with drink an' Featherbed Nelly.

LUKE: Aw, she'd pluck th' fledge (*GOLDEN MAGGIE appears in doorway*) outa any tough bird.

MAGGIE (*as she trips in*): What bir-d?

YOCKLE: A half-fledged hawk was salted in th' Green Hills
O' Tallaght.

(*KNACKER comes in carrying two large yellow jars, which he places, with a thud on the floor. NOBBLER and YOCKLE join him.*)

MAGGIE (*stepping tipsily towards bed*): Well, I'm no ha-awk;
yous won't salt me-e;

(*She hesitates and looks down at LUKE in bed.*)

Aw, don't be talkin'; but Zozimus, you'll make
A love-ly corpses; you'll be gorgis in cra-ape.

LUKE: Ah, nothin' for me if I'm not stretched clean in clover.
(*MAGGIE stoops down to him.*)

MAGGIE: I'd lo-ove to lay yous out.

LUKE (*groaning as MAGGIE sways over him*): It looks if yous will.

YOCKLE (*approaching MAGGIE*): Hold there! (*grips her.*)

MAGGIE (*maudling*): Aw, Yockle, me duckie, here wez are
Mabbe th' last time to-ge-ther—yewer hard chaw,
Maggie,
Yewer Zozimus snuffin' it; an' yewersel' off wit' th'
red coats
Be to-morrow's duskis. (*YOCKLE retires awkwardly.*)

LUKE (*risés in bed*): Who's off?

YOCKLE (*slowly*): Nobody!

LUKE (*sternly*): Eh, leavin' me

To quiet th' piper! Now, Maggie, who told ya that;
Who told ya that Yockle's skidaddlin off be to-night?

MAGGIE (*half singing*): O, Featherbed Nelly with a crubeen in
her puss.

YOCKLE: Ah, that wan is liary.

LUKE: Well, damn it, if any wan nabs me,
Yockle, I'll have ya ridin' in Botany Bay.

MAGGIE (*still half singing*):

When bowlegged Yockle joined th' Highlanders
He lost his shillin' in th' Stawberry Beds.

YOCKLE (*as LUKE lies down*): Now don't ya see that wan's
coddin' ya. (*To MAGGIE*): Stop makin' trouble.
Make yersel' handy, woman; here, tip us a mug.

(*MAGGIE gropes by the end of the bed and picks a mug from the floor. A voice is heard outside the door.*)

BYRNE: Here's froth o' th' fun!

NOBBLER: After all, Harefoot Mike wants *no* gaffer.

BYRNE: Gwan outa that, 'twas me threw Janglers th' word.

MAGGIE (*handing mug to YOCKLE*): Harefoot's gone pantin' wit'
wind in his ta-il for a pri-est.

LUKE (*grabbing the bottle at his head*): Yous better then have me
coffined before th' priest's here.

(*He drinks, while NOBBLER holds mug which BYRNE fills from jar. JANGLERS DEEGAN, the low-sized melodeon player, stands in the doorway; he is cloaked and with a conically-shaped hat well set on his head.*)

DEEGAN (*from doorway*). Is this th' pitch o' th' wake, men?

NOBBLER: There's signs o' wan here
Anyways.

BYRNE: Ya, if Zozimus kicks it. (*DEEGAN enters.*)

YOCKLE: Janglers,
Me ould gizabo, leave it there. (*They shake hands.*)

DEEGAN: He's snuffin' it! An' time for that fluke fishy, eel skinny
Rhyme twister o' a poet.

LUKE (*hoarsely*): Hell blast yer wind, Deegan.

YOCKLE: Now whist there, Zozimus; give him his comfort,
Maggie;

Janglers, ya see he hasn't as yet conked out—
But he's as good as done, so you's better give him
A tony send off.

DEEGAN: I'll send him wit' lugs burnin'
To glory.

MAGGIE: There's nothin' like th' music for warmin'
Th' lugs.

YOCKLE: Here, Deegan, quit yewer spleen; his death's
Th' best turn in yewer life.

LUKE (*coughing*) : A' th' devil best him ;
 But that's th' return I get for th' legacy I left
 To fatten him.

DEEGAN : What ? legacy from yous !

LUKE : 'Tis in me will
 Cod-distilled, labelled an' sealed b' th' parchin' bar
 Attorneys o' dirty Dicks an' scrivenered in sheepskin
 That to wan Janglers Deegan, organ blower,
 I bestow me wind, me itch, an' me pitch in th' poodle.
 DEEGAN : Yer well rid o' yer wind an' yer itch wit' neither whistles
 Or harps in hell—for *that'll* be yer pitch,
 Wit' less kick in ya, than Billy in th' bowl.

MAGGIE (*calming LUKE*) : A' yewer dancin' days are dimmin'.

NOBBLER (*handing drink to DEEGAN*) : Come, throw that back
 That'll help t' keep yer fingers greased for th' night.

YOCKLE (*taking melodeon from DEEGAN*) : They'll have t' b' limber
 to humour wan o' them yokes.

(NOBBLER watches YOCKLE examining the melodeon. In the course of the examination YOCKLE draws the melodeon fully out and as he presses it back the instrument makes a strong hissing sound.)

BYRNE (*hearing sound looks towards LUKE*) : What's that ? B' God
 he's losin' his last clap o' wind.

MAGGIE : Holy hour !

NOBBLER : Don't be so windy, ya bladder ;
 Ya hear it's only a wheeze from this box o' bagpipes.

(Four wakers appear at the door ; while NOBBLER, YOCKLE and DEEGAN whisper over the melodeon.)

BYRNE (*looking towards WAKERS*) : Yewer welcome, boys.

WAKER : So, Zozimus flittin', we're told.

MAGGIE : Yez, flittin' ; may heaven support him.

ANOTHER WAKER : We'll help him on
 His road.

WAKER : An' then pay our best respects.

BYRNE : Pay nothin'
 Till ya get somethin', me skylarkin' lads o' th' Liberties.
 MAGGIE : There's little respects ever paid for corpse-house porter ;
 But this porter has plenty o' body in it.
 Am I right, Knacker ?

BYRNE (*beckoning WAKERS for drink*) : It's given ya a kick anyways.

DEEGAN (*taking melodeon*): If yez only touch it rightly it'll
giggle like

A girl.

NOBBLER:

A girl!

B' hell, Janglers, did ya beckon yer whipsters up?

DEEGAN: Me whipsters! Ya mean me dancin' twins o' daughters?

NOBBLER: Course! Fareo's young wan and Jezebel, th' wan an'
only.

YOCKLE: As cushy a flutter o' dancers as ever rattled

A gut-board on th' pavins.

MAGGIE:

An' last Sunday down

Th' Waxies Dargle they danced so ladylike

Ya could hear th' grass growin' under their natty feet.

YOCKLE: A lovely pair, God's truth!

NOBBLER:

A' cut out th' cackle;

Are they comin', Janglers?

DEEGAN:

Well, if they're me female daughters

They'll be as near me elbow as a poet's to porter.

LUKE (*half drunk*): As near as a poet's to porter! Is that what
he said, Maggie?

MAGGIE:

Yez, me poetryman.

LUKE:

Well I'm cheated

An' I on me death bed; Yockle, heave me th' jar!

YOCKLE: B' easy there; already yer douched in malt;

So I won't stupify ya in porter.

NOBBLER:

Sure, Zozimus,

In th' throws o' death man, malt's as good as a helmet.

LUKE: But porter's a better breastplate to th' belly.

DEEGAN: Th' only breastplate yous want is wan for yer coffin.

MAGGIE (*to LUKE*): An' were yez not taped yet for yewer carcase
box?

Aw' that's a holy shame.

(*She begins to fidget at the bed. THREE WAKERS enter, huddled and disguised as mummings, with tall straw head gear pulled over their faces. They go silently and kneel beside the bed, while BYRNE, with NOBBLER'S assistance, distributes drink among them.*)

MAGGIE : Aw, janie, it'll take drays o' money fittin' yous t' th' veins

O' nicity in a carcase box. Yewer an awful
Long lath o' a man.

LUKE (*drinking and groaning*) :

Nothin' shorter than a cloud-catcher
From the Pine Forest 'll fit me.

A VOICE : A po-et to th' last !

YOCKLE : He's not th' boy to make a gobful o' songs

An, then go pop th' oul' jaw harp.

SHRILL FEMALE VOICE (*from bedside*) : Aw, stop yewer goster !

Will ya see if th' life

Is yet in his li-mbs ?

MAGGIE (*forlorn*) : I tried for to feel his fe-et,

But, misses wo-man, jew-el, th' cru-ubs are still

In his bo-its.

LUKE (*in a voice thick with drink*) : It's in th' prophecies . . . I'll
die in me boots.

YOCKLE (*tries to hustle crowd from bed*) :

Don't queer th' pitch ; back !

What are yez gawkin' at—eh ?

A blue-bum monkey from Van Deeman's Land ?

FIRST VOICE : Maybe.

SECOND VOICE : Somethin' pickled in a bottle o' brine !

(*Laughter.*)

YOCKLE (*angrily pushing the group*) :

Have some respect for th' dead an' dyin'.

Yewer stinkin' his sacred breath.

NOBBLER (*going to YOCKLE's assistance*) :

Who'll give us a blast o' a song ?

YOCKLE (*pushing crowd aside*) :

Outa decency, rise th' wake wit' a song.

(*Cheers from CROWD.*)

SOME HANDS (*as the crowd moves at YOCKLE's persuasion from the bed*) : Clap ! Clap ! Clap, clap, clap, clap !

SOME TINS (*against wood*) : Bang ! Bang ! Bang, bang, bang,
bang !

TIN WHISTLE AND VOICES (*played to same rhythm*) :

So ! So ! la so me do

Ra fa so, fa me ra do.

MELODEON (*immediately continues the melody*) :

Do me te, do me fa so——

(and so on, while the player marches to sit upon a full sack, leaning against wall to the left front. Most WAKERS follow the MELODEON PLAYER and sit in a formation suggesting a semi-circle with backs to audience ; other players move silently and half hidden in the rare shadows.

A final group of five WAKERS, all disguised, enter ; they huddle like evil things to the bedside. LUKE and his bed are now entirely cut off from view, as they are also during the ballet, by the movements of groups. The footlights, for the first time, are raised dimly—showing the most extravagant colours of the WAKERS' ragged, yet fantastic clothes. The moon's ray from the skylight dies out, and the door is shut. All movements throw a tangle of elongated shadows against the sloping roof.

Increasing speed is essential to the success of this scene, which must be played with an air of spontaneity).

VOICE (on a note or two before melodeon stops, sings out loudly accompanied by tin whistle) : The night before Larry was stretched.

BYRNE (*speaks to whistle's tune, which accompanies each speaking voice*) : Aw, spare th' man's dyin' feelin's !

FIRST WAKER : Eh, Zozimus, sit up and try

To word us "The Findin' o' Moses."

(*A moment's silence.*)

SECOND WAKER : His grinders by now are shut fast.

THIRD WAKER : Then why should yous mind th' oul' stiff, so ?

FIRST WAKER : Let Maggie there give us a blast !

THIRD WAKER : She'd rattle our buck teeth in water—

A VOICE (*sings*) : An' drain off th' tears from our eyes.

(*On the whistle's last note, without a pause, the melodeon begins the tune of "Moses" ; and to this tune the wakers sway—reed-like—as if they were swaying to the wind from a great river. The melodeon tune dies out on the second bar, but the tin whistle has taken up the melody ; the WAKERS maintain their swaying movements throughout the song.*)

GOLDEN MAGGIE (*sings in background*) :

In Agypt's land contaygious to the Nile,
Old Pharaos daughter went to bathe in style,
She tuk her dip and came unto the land,
And for to dry her royal pelt she ran along the strand.
A bull-rush tripped her, whereupon she saw
A smiling babbly in a wad of straw.
She took it up and said in accents mild,

"Tare-an-ages, girls, which o' yees owns the child ? "

(*On a note or two before the song by GOLDEN MAGGIE stops, the melodeon again takes up the melody. Immediately PHAROAH'S DAUGHTER—from behind the WAKERS*

—leaps forward dancing "The Cradle Dance." She is dressed in a clinging eau-de-nil garment, bare-footed and with the tousled red hair of a bather; in her bare arms she carries as a baby a long black horse-tail. During this dance the WAKERS keep up their reed-like movements in the manner of a revue chorus; and from the rare voices interject when appropriate).

GUTTIE : That wan's a fine pair o' shafts !

BOWZIE : Now, who'd have a sweat

At th' Hot Wall ?

GOUDGER : Yis, over a live corpse !

SHAWLIE (as PHAROAH'S DAUGHTER waves the horse-tail) :

Hairy enough

For a ch-ild in' th' arms !

(With each last bar of the tune the WAKERS sing out :)

Tare an' ages, girls, which o' yeas owns th' ch-ild.

(On the final bar the excited WAKERS—as if lifted on a wave of frenzy—swiftly encircle the dancers who are quickly lost in a momentary tempest of capers.

Clatterbones or castenets are heard above the din. The group suddenly break asunder. NOBBLER is left in the centre of the stage, half dancing, half walking, like a tipsy street singer, and accompanying himself on the clatterbones, faintly assisted by the tin whistle, he sings :)

God rest that Jewy woman,
 Queen Jezebel the witch
 Who peeled the clothes from her shoulder-bones
 Down to her spent teats
 As she stretched out of the window
 Among the geraniums, where
 She chaffed and laughed like one half daft
 Tittivating her painted hair—

King Jehu he drove to her,
 She tipped him a fancy beck;
 But he from his knacky side-car spoke
 "Who'll break that scraggy neck?"
 And so she was thrown from the window;
 Like Lucifer she fell
 Beneath the feet of the horses and they beat
 The light out of Jezebel,

That corpse wasn't planted in clover ;
 Ah, nothing of her was found
 Save those grey bones that Hare-foot Mike
 Gave me for their lovely sound ;
 And as once her dancing body
 Made star-lit princes sweat
 So I'll just clack : though her ghost lacks a back
 There's music in the old bones yet.

(The SINGER repeats the last two bars of each verse on the clatterbones. Half way through the first verse of that song the WAKERS, moved by the intensifying rhythm, begin a variety of gestures synchronizing with the words ; as the song develops they become more excited and wildly demonstrative. Out of the passionate group, JEZEBEL—like one shaken in demonic possession—jumps to her dance, as the song stops. JEZEBEL is cloaked ; but above the staid cloak, she has a shock of green hair, crimson painted ears, black lips and a wizened old grey face. In a moment's breath, the cloak is pulled off her by some of the frenzied crowd until she dances with her slim athletic body entirely bare, except for her breasts, which are cupped by eagle claws of gold, and her loins mailed with strips of plated brass. She dances coldly. Her dance and "The Cradle Dance" are improvisations on Irish folk melody—modernised into fantastic settings for the melodeon. While she dances GOLDEN MAGGIE unconcernedly lights three holy candles on the barrels above LUKE'S bed ; and from that unseen bed there is heard occasionally a grunt or the note of a body's back chat—the latter may or may not be heard according to the producer's indiscretion. JEZEBEL finishes her dance and, half broken, disappears among the crowd ; and as the crowd, to the music, break up in jigacting dances, the slow taps of a blind man's stick are heard ascending the stairs outside.)

TWO OR THREE VOICES : Whisht !

(Intense silence. The crowd listens, the slow stick taps become louder.)

MAGGIE : That sounds mighty like blind Zozimus.
 BYRNE : If it's not the tap o' the blind, it's th' sound o' th' dead.
 MAGGIE : Holy Martyrs ! He must have died an yez
 At yewer capers.

VOICE : That dancin' devil ov a wan
 Took his breath clean away.

DEEGAN : An' that was th' connie dance.

YOCKLE : An' 'twas that hearty you'd hear her guts crack. . . .

(The door opens with a bang. In grey light, blind MICHAEL MORAN—tall and gaunt, wearing a high hat, corduroy breeches, a green long coat with scalloped tail and cape—hesitates for a moment.)

MAGGIE : His livin' ghost !

WOMEN (crossing themselves) : God's heavenly saints preserve us.

MORAN (*raging, yet striding in with uncertainty, brandishing a blackthorn stick that is tied to his wrist*):

Get out, ye divil's bitches, get outa me lodgin'.

(*Striking wildly at the crowd that breaks like players in blindman's buff.*)

Out, to th' hobs o' hell . . . if yez want a corpse . . .

DEEGAN: The Pope himsel' won't lay this ghost!

MORAN: If yez want

A wake . . . I'll lay yez out. (*Strikes BYRNE.*)

BYRNE: Ugh, that stick's no ghost.

(HAREFOOT MIKE *appears at door.*)

MIKE: O, sacred Adam an' Eve!

MORAN (*as he strikes wildly*): Harefoot, bar that door.

(MIKE *closes the door.*)

I'll skin them; I'll raddle their rumps with this batterin' ram.

MIKE (*appealingly*): Quiet yoursel', now Zozimus, quiet yoursel'.

MORAN: I'll raddle them.

MIKE: Yewer only woolin' th' wrong wans.

MALE VOICE: Who's th' wrong wans?

FEMALE VOICE: Harefoot's right.

(*Women in sympathy crowd around MORAN and MIKE.*)

MAGGIE: He's th' only plug

O' a man in th' whole o' yewer windy mil-ish-a!

MIKE: It's a cryin' shame, girls, here's Zozimus . . .

YOCKLE: That's not Zozimus.

NOBBLER: That's only a playactor.

MORAN (*struggling from women and roaring*):

O, sweet heavenly justice!

Ya pair o' hangman's offals; I'll gut yez for garters;
Yous are th' snatchers who coaxed me at noon from
me pitch,

Who plied me with liquor, inveigled me outa me senses
An' when I came to, below in Featherbed Nelly's . . .

FEMALE VOICES: In Featherbed Nelly's!

MIKE: That painted bester o' virtue.

MORAN : That wet nurse o' sin, she held me in clutches while yous
Pawnd me for dead, skinned gents for me burial dibs . . .

MAGGIE : Ay, robbin' th' dead before death.

NOBBLER : Who's robbin' th' dead ?
That fella's only a chancer, bouncin' inta
This tidy skit o' a wake. Grrr, pay no heed
To his codactin'.

MORAN (*restrained by women from striking NOBBLER*) : Go long, ya
varmint, or
I'll brain-scatter ya.

MAGGIE : He's no codactor ; I know yez,
Yez can't fool Maggie. Listen, girls. . . .

YOCKLE (*interrupting*) : Ah, now,
Don't flutter yewersel', me own geranium ;
I always stood b' ya—eh, Maggie ; I never
Let ya down, not for a month o' Sundays. (*Ogling her.*)
Ya know, Maggie (*winking*), Goose Green b' to-
morrow's night.

(*Men use this opportunity to continue quietly to drink.*)

MAGGIE : Mop up yewer slobber ! Yous won't then birdlime me ;
Go on now, slippin' off to yewer soldierin' wit'
Th' ragamuffin manoeuvres.

YOCKLE : Now quit yewer set
On me ; I'm not th' first milisha man
You've cocked an eye at.

MORAN (*trying a break from the women to attack YOCKLE*) :
Didn't I tell ya, clear out !

MIKE (*going towards MORAN*) : Now, hold yewer whist for a tick,
Zozimus,
She'll floor him.

* * * * *

YOCKLE : A bright splash
O' blood is th' wan order ever on this chest.

MAGGIE : Ha, Yockle ; th' only medals yous ever got
Was black eyes b' th' dozen.

YOCKLE (*offering his mouth, attempting to embrace her*) :
Leave it there, Maggie.

MAGGIE (*pushing him aside*) : Go long, wit' a gob on yous black
as th' devil's romp.

MORAN (*from among the pampering women*) : Here stop arguin' yer
tuppeny toss on my pitch ;
Clear out, the whole trollopin' lot o' yez or so,
B' Kilmainham, I'll have yez committed for duddin'
Yer indecencies on my floor.

(YOCKLE joins men.)

MAGGIE (*turning to MORAN*) : Now, calm yewersel'
Zozimus ; we're on yewer side. (*Clinging to MORAN.*)
Aren't yous wit' us,
Girls ?

FEMALE VOICES : Yis !

ONE VOICE : Every woman's limb o' us !

MAGGIE : I knew it, Zozimus, aw, I'm well backed ;
Soldiers an' poets, thems th' sturdies to keep us,
Girls, perky.

MORAN : For glory's honour, Maggie,
Keep yer grain o' sense.

MAGGIE : Yewer right, th' red coats
Mabbe handy in th' Phoenix ; but its yous,
Th' lively, flighty, poetry boys that rise
Th' very devil an' have us, b' heavens, like bees
On th' wing.

(Women applaud.)

MORAN : Let me be ; give us a breathin' space.
Don't ya see I'm flattened b' Featherbed's ; can't
ya pity
Me two blind eyes.

MAGGIE : Aw, janie, I pity them. Who else
Could pity them, but Maggie ? I'm yewer woman,
Zozimus an' from now on I'll be th' sight
O' yewer two blank eyes. . . .

MORAN : Aw, soft talk.

MAGGIE (*in attitudes*) : . . . Yewer bully woman,
 Round in flesh an' sound in bone ; I'll whiten
 Me knuckles—to raise th' cup or strike a blow
 For yous ; an' unbeknownest to th' knife-grinders soon
 I'll sharpen yer tongue, yis an' greg ya at singin' like
 A linnet from a window, 'gainst all comers ;
 (*Softly*) Or betimes, me love dealin' poetry-man, I'll
 gather

Ya to mesel' an' be yewer shadow, till our days flick out,
 As summer lightnin,' beyond th' blinkin' skylight.

BYRNE : B' God, Maggie, its a weddin' yewer after
 An' not a wake.

MALE VOICE : Ha, Maggie, has yewer fancy man
 Yet seen th' priest ?

MORAN : Ya common streal o' crawlers,
 Spewin' yer gutter talk ; an' under me roof.

MAGGIE : If yous wanta know th' priest'll be here any tick.

MORAN (*shocked*) : A priest to be here, to be here !

MAGGIE (*quietly*) : Yis, Zozimus,
 Harefoot went for wan.

MORAN : Harefoot went for a priest
 For here an' for what ? Harefoot, ya gurrier, come
 here !

MIKE : I only asked Father Jarlaths o' Adam an' Eve's
 To come here for a bit.

MORAN : For what ?

MIKE : To 'noint yous for

Yewer death !

MORAN : O, Mary o' Agypt ! To 'noint me ? me ?

FEMALE VOICES : A holy disgrace !

(MORAN *tries to follow* MIKE.)

MIKE : Yockle an' Nobbler egged me on.

YOCKLE and NOBBLER : Yer liary.

WOMEN : Th' gulpin' heathens.

MORAN (*addresses men*) : Any white man,
 Should belt hell outa them.

WOMEN : Th' drunken skuts o' niggers.

MEN : Be that as it may, we'll stand by th' corpse that stood us
 The liquor.

MORAN : Corpse . . . who's corpse ?
 BYRNE : The corpse o' Zozimus

There in th' wad.
 MORAN (*pleadingly*) : But I am Zozimus ; an' you'd
 Rob Zozimus o' bed an' board—yis, pinch his last rites
 An' bilk him in death wit' a second hand blessin',
 but I'll

Let yez see that I'm th' poet in th' poodle—
 Yer lark o' the liberties. I'm no corpse.

MEN : And how
 Th' hell can we tell which o' yez the right corpse . . .

YOCKLE : Don't mind th' oul' imposter, boys.

MEN (*as they raise LUKE with difficulty into a standing position*) :
 . . . but this

Is our corpse . . . and it's dead with th' drink . . . as
 drunk as a stick.

(LUKE is held standing upright and when it is seen that he is completely identical
 in height and appearance with MICHAEL MORAN the crowd break into laughter.)

LUKE (*almost incoherent*) : Sth lark o' sth Liberties.
 (MORAN looks puzzled for a few silent moments.)

MORAN : So yewer me corpse . . .
 Luke Gaffney, th' common play-actor ; so help me.

DEEGAN (*in amazement*) : What ? Luke !
 Me singin' buttie !

(Laughs wildly, while MORAN makes mad rush brandishing stick in LUKE's
 direction.)

MORAN : I'll fight blood to th' eyes.

DEEGAN (*rushing after MORAN and waving his melodeon, like a
 pennon going into battle*) :

B' hell, ya wont ; you'll queer our pitch no more.

(The WOMEN rush to MORAN's support ; with the scrimmage the lighted candles
 on the barrels are knocked over and in the semi-darkness there can be heard a variety
 of grunts, groans, thumps and blows. DEEGAN and MAGGIE emerge struggling
 together on the left side of the crowd.)

DEEGAN (*to MAGGIE who is holding one end of the elongated melodeon*) :
 Let out me instrument.

MAGGIE (*trying to pull away the melodeon*) : How dare yous go
 For me—yous an' yewer wrinkled squeegee.

DEEGAN : Let go !

Its me wife's ; its me wife's.

BYRNE (*trys to separate them*) : Now listen, Maggie, let go
The thing.

MAGGIE (*still holding and panting*) : I'll stretch it for him, I'll
stretch it !

(*With BYRNE's assistance the pair are pulled back stage until they are hidden by the rushing and shoving of a crowd too busy in its own little wars.*)

BYRNE (*from behind the crowd as the melodeon gives a fierce squeal*) :
Ah hell

You've strangled it, Maggie.

MAGGIE : Ha, ha, it won't rattle again.

DEEGAN : Ya common strap yous ruined me. Let go, let go !

(*Unseen in the darkness of the back stage MAGGIE hoists DEEGAN up on her back ; she holds him by the neck, like a sack, on the broad of her back.*)

MAGGIE (*slowly walking towards footlights with DEEGAN unseen on her back*) :

I've knocked ya now, an' inta th' yard wit' yous.

(*During the excitement of this scene LUKE has, entirely unnoticed, crawled, on his hands and knees, out of the right side of the bed ; and with drunken difficulty and occasional hesitations he half drags himself and his bottle towards the centre of the stage front. MAGGIE, facing audience, stands in front of LUKE and as she looks down at him she gives him one or two kicks when suddenly the door opens and in the wine-tinted light outside, a PRIEST stands. The outside light is fully upon him as he silently watches the struggle on the dark stage. After a few moments the crowd become aware of the PRIEST ; the struggle immediately stops as the fighters turn sheepishly towards the door. MAGGIE noticing the silence turns round to look at the door ; for the first time the audience see DEEGAN on her back ; when MAGGIE sees the PRIEST she forgetfully drops DEEGAN who falls right on top of LUKE and in the concluding scene they remain in affectionate grips.*)

ONE-THIRD OF CROWD (*near door, with outstretched arms, kneel and innocently gasp*) : Holy father !

MIDDLE CROWD (*with same gestures*) : Holy father !

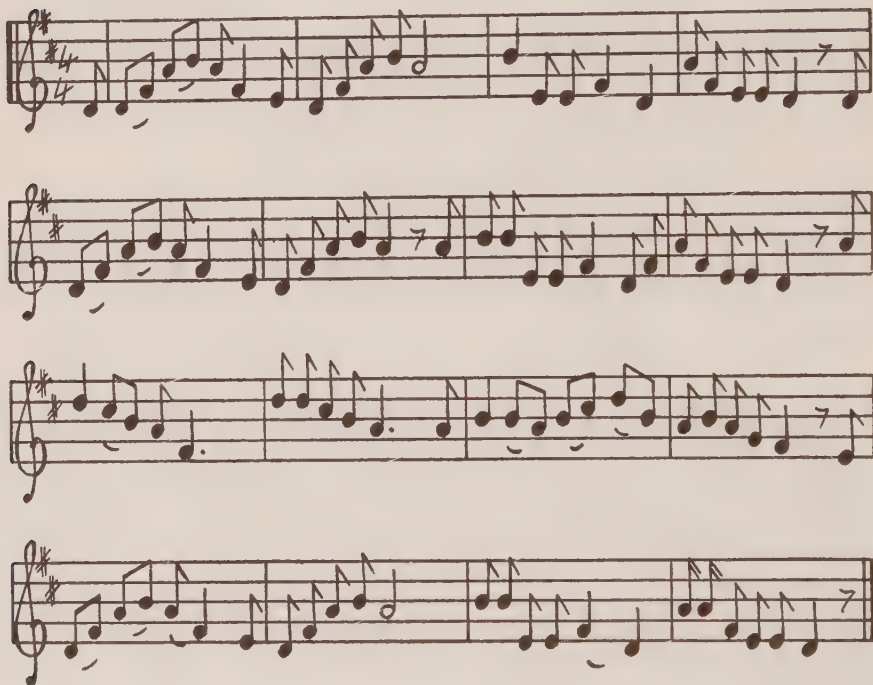
CROWD (*near bed, with same gestures*) : Holy father !

(*Slow CURTAIN as PRIEST descends to the stage.*)

MUSIC FOR "A DEUCE O' JACKS."

"The Finding of Moses"—on page 39.

Arranged by ARTHUR DUFF.



"The Song for the CLATTERBONES" on page 40.

Arranged by ARTHUR DUFF.



DANIEL CORKERY

By Sean O'Faolain

B. Cork, 1878.

Works :—*The Onus of Ownership*. Unpublished.

Israel's Incense. Unpublished.

The Yellow Bittern

King and Hermit

Clan Falvey

The Labour Leader

} 1920. Plays.

The Threshold of Quiet. A novel. 1917.

A Munster Twilight. Stories. 1917.

Hounds of Banba. Stories. 1920.

The Stormy Hills. Stories. 1929.

The Hidden Ireland. Criticism. 1925.

Synge and Anglo-Irish Literature. Criticism. 1931.

I Bhreasail. Verse. 1920.

THE chronology of Daniel Corkery's works is in itself an indication of the movement of his mind, and because he is representative of a tendency not uncommon in Ireland—among the general public—an indication of a great deal in modern Irish life and criticism.

His first works were plays, mainly one-act plays, produced often by himself in a little theatre in Cork city, called *The Dún*, or *The Fort*, a romantic title significant of the times. Here, working with enthusiasm, a small band of players and playwrights (and they were, wisely, keen on writing their own plays) produced plays by men like Corkery, T. C. Murray, Con O'Leary, Daniel Harrington, Terence MacSwiney, Patrick Higgins, and others. They were plays typical of the Anglo-Irish revival in drama, forcefully conceived, tragic, even melodramatic, romantic—as with Corkery's own *King and Hermit*, or his unpublished and more ambitious *Israel's Incense* : all a little mannered and stylistic and literary. The play *Clan Falvey* came later, as did the three act play dealing with Labour strikes in Ireland, and evidently suggested by the whirling figure of Jim Larkin—*The Labour Leader* : first produced at the Abbey Theatre in 1920.

Meanwhile the nationalist revival had begun to capture these young men's imaginations, and as if in a desire for a closer analysis

of Irish life than the drama seemed to afford, Corkery turned to the writing of a novel and a volume of short-stories. The stories, ineptly called after Yeats's *A Celtic Twilight—A Munster Twilight* appeared first: the novel was published the year after. These stories have little about them that is likely to suggest the delicacy and fantasy of Yeats's lovely verse: they are cast in a different key and came out of a more direct approach to life. Here and there, as in the opening story, *The Ploughing of Leaca Bán*, the too-literary quality still asserts itself, but in the city stories, often, nearly always indeed, of the poor-folk in the slums of the city, the note is much more like that of a folk-tale. At the end of the book, grouped under the title of *The Cobbler's Den*, we get stories that could with a little more shaping be called pure city-folklore.

This is an entirely original note in Anglo-Irish literature for though a novel like James Stephens' *Mary Mary* may antedate *A Munster Twilight*, there is a self-conscious fantastical note of the more practised literary man in Stephens' little masterpiece of frolic, and the compact, intimate, 'folksy' quality of life that is revealed, as typical of Cork city, in Corkery's stories could not, in fact, have been evoked in a metropolis. Not that Corkery has not his own whimsical humour; it is the charm of his personality; but it is not whimsy because it is the laughter of a kindly delight in reality, and no doubt nothing would so please its author as to be told that in the grotesquerie of these little yarns there is a distinct echo of the medieval note in literature.

The novel, delicate, brooding, sensitive, tragic, not without a grotesque note—as in the character of Stevie Galvin—fulfilled absolutely the promise of the stories. It is, without question, a lovely novel, and for many even a perfect novel. Almost aggressively regionalist, it admits no view of life but the local, Irish view: a glimpse of other worlds serving only to support the sense of the inevitability of that view, and to sear the heart with a sense of the delimitation of life within a code, humbly accepted, loyally unquestioned, despairingly followed to tragedy in the one case, to renunciation in the other. It is a somewhat gloomy book, and the emphasis of the motto that introduces it makes it almost unbearable to recall—Thoreau's chance statement that "the mass of men lead lives of quiet desperation." Yet there is a balsam to soothe as one reads, a tenderness, almost too-sweet, for the girl Lily Bresnan and her young brother Finbarr, both secretly con-

templating the renunciation of life in religion when, in despair, the other brother Frank has abandoned an unequal struggle by suicide. This feminine note in Corkery has to be noticed—it seems to vanish almost completely in his later work: it could scarcely, indeed, survive a widening of interest, an acknowledgment of the validity of other worlds.

Bright grass, homely flowers—phlox, marigolds, gladioli—trembling poplar leaves, dancing shadows—Lily Bresnan's nook on the hillside was an Autumn lyric, mellow and glad, a sweet music that needed no heightening, no enriching, while that gentle girl, earnestly bent upon her task, lingered in the sun. She put the thread between her teeth and broke it. With a little clatter the scissors fell to the dappled ground. There it remained. A robin, quite suddenly, winged across her, and was lost in the sun-flushed foliage. Stitch, stitch, without hurry. The garment was held up and examined. She stooped and her fingers, but not her eyes, searched for the fallen scissors. Far away in the crowded valley a convent bell was ringing for evening Benediction. Then, again suddenly, the robin flung out a little phrase of melody. It ceased, but the far-off bell continued, very sweet, very faint. The scissors once again fell to the ground. There it remained.

There is no need to comment: the words convey the lyrical quality of the mind that so pictured life—mellow; flushed foliage; lingered; dappled; gentle; homely; sweet; very faint. If one had any criticism to make it would be that life so gently imaged, and in a plot of such humble and effortless evasion, could hardly offer many themes, little action, little drama, and must end by reducing almost to inarticulateness so quietly lyrical an observer. The characters of such a world, so will-less, so quiescent, so passionless, may—and here did to perfection—offer matter for a lyric in prose: or might, if conceived with more masculinity, offer matter for a Greek tragedy: but as for the novelist they out-Chekov Chekov who wrote, also, many lovely lyrics, and with a wider experience of life, and an acceptance of a greater variety of valid worlds, many stories that were more than lyrics; but, he also, no series of novels.

The influence of Corkery's novel was neither strong nor pervasive. It was, for one thing, what one may call a middle-aged novel: for another, and mainly, it was not followed by a second novel. But

it was an event for some of us. One must remember that in 1917 the Irish novel had produced few examples: the game was still, in the main, with the poets and the dramatists. We had a dozen novels from Moore, but all, except *The Lake*, dealt with English life and in a hard French way: we had Joyce's *Dubliners*, but they were stories and were cruel and unpleasant and Flaubertian. *Mary Mary* was a bit too metropolitan and too whimsical. What we wanted was a novel like this, come out of truly popular life, that would do for popular life what the Eliots and Hardys had already done for English popular life. When I say *we*, I suppose I mean youngsters like O'Connor and O'Flaherty and myself, who hoped one day to be novelists. Unhappily the very perfection, and the controlled 'middle-aged' quality of Corkery's novel, and above all, its limited scope, prevented its possible effect. Young men are rebellious—and it was the time of rebellions—and they are ambitious. In a phrase of O'Flaherty's, in a letter to me, we wanted to "bite off mountains with our teeth." There was not enough fire in this book to light any torch. We were far more excited, though horrified, by Joyce's *Portrait of the Artist as a Young Man*: we felt much nearer to *The Brothers Karamazov*, to *Torrents of Spring* even, to *The Death of Ivan Ilyitch*, than to *The Threshold of Quiet*. After all, *The Kreutzer Sonata* was so wicked!

Corkery's later stories have not been, by any means, so good. We loved *The Hounds of Banba*, stories of the Irish revolution, as long as we were elated by being young revolutionaries ourselves: but the more we saw of revolution the less we liked Corkery's lyric, romantic, idea of revolution and revolutionaries. It is a personal kind of criticism, admittedly, and it is not detached and it is, largely, the resentment of young men who had begun to compare romance with reality; and in the end it may well be astray. But it remains. The realistic novel and the realistic story was in the making. O'Casey was scratching out his first efforts: so, no doubt, were O'Flaherty, O'Donnell, O'Connor. Against that convention Corkery could have easily smiled had he chosen to continue with his gentle, and faultless lyricism, or with his homely, folksy, whimsical, grotesque humour of *The Cobbler's Den*. These young men might know about the revolution, about blood, cowardice, fear, and horror, and courage. For wandering in and out of the hillside cabins, travelling by night, taking back-

roads, sleeping in a different bed every night, they might even boast that they had come to know the country-folk as no would-be writers had ever chanced to know them before. But Corkery knew his lane-people, his city-types, far better. Alas, he chose to write after *The Threshold of Quiet* about the farmers and fisher-folk, in a mood and in a manner and with a preconceived approach that tended to falsify all he wrote, and for the understanding of which—and it is an approach that has found innumerable disciples, and has affected Irish emotions widely—we must turn to his two works of criticism.

In a few words—he began to idealise what he had observed from a distance, and worst of all, to idealise it according to a certain set of a priori ideas about life and literature which were wandering around Ireland at the time, waiting to be articulated by some able man. He has expressed these ideas in his *The Hidden Ireland*, and *Synge and Anglo-Irish Literature*. He has expressed them well, and they are thought-provoking books. But he has not since then written more than a few short-stories on the level of his earlier work.

2

The book on Synge, coming later, contains the application to Anglo-Irish letters of the historical attitude outlined in *The Hidden Ireland*. The Introduction sums it all up, and is a marvellous piece of special pleading, though written in elusive English that is often vague and sometimes quite meaningless. In sum (according to this point of view) Anglo-Irish Literature, since 1900 in particular, is "astray" as an interpretation of Irish life, gives "no adequate expression" to the forces "that work their will in the consciousness of the Irish people," and—a typically suggestive but unprecise sentence—its practitioners did not "use such intellectual equipment as they possessed,"

sometimes admirable in itself, for the high purposes of art—the shaping out into chaste and enduring form of a genuine emotional content, personal to themselves but conscionable to the nation.

Writing for an English market ("keeps its eyes on the foreign merchants who are to purchase its wares") it has been "misled" from the start. In brief, Anglo-Irish literature is not an adequate interpretation of Irish life.

To illustrate this Corkery takes a hurling-match at Thurles, a crowd of thirty thousand country and town folk, and says,

It was while I looked around at that great crowd I first became acutely conscious that as a nation we were without self-expression in literary form. The life of this people I looked upon—there were all sorts of individuals present, from bishops to tramps off the road—was not being explored in a natural way by any except one or two writers of any standing. . . . One could not see Yeats, Æ, Stephens, Dunsany, Moore, Robinson, standing out from that gathering as natural and indigenous interpreters of it. On the other hand there seems to be no difficulty in posing Galsworthy, Masfield, Bennett, Wells, against corresponding assemblies in England. . . . Those English crowds are 100 per cent. English: and the writers who best express the individual souls that make them up are 100 per cent. English. . . . The writers in a normal country are one with what they write of.

To those who have accepted Anglo-Irish literature as literature this will sound painful. To those who approach it as the expression of a high-hearted Nationalism it will be (and was) a trumpet-call. With a little alteration it would equally well trumpet encouragement to all Nazis, Fascists, Communists, and every other type of exclusivist for whom the essential test of literature is a political, racial, or religious test. All a Nazi need do, to make that passage personally gratifying, is to put for "Yeats, Æ, Stephens, etc."—Ludwig, Feuchtwanger, Toller, etc., with 100 per cent. Teuton in his mind and a meeting at the Munich Spielplatz instead of Thurles.

One may pass over the disingenuousness of Corkery's choice of lyric writers from the Irish group (Yeats, Dunsany, Stephens, Æ) instead of O'Donnell, O'Connor, O'Casey, and such like as possible interpreters of the "mob"; and of Naturalistic writers from the English group, Bennett, Wells, Galsworthy. He is, after all, fighting here for a propagandist idea and may be forgiven a little sharp practice. But one does not so easily forgive his suggestion that "the writers who best express the individual souls of England" are Bennett, Wells, Galsworthy. Not because they may not but because one knows well that Corkery sincerely thinks these writers very small beer: one knows that his spiritual

affinities are writers like Musset and Turgenev, the feminine lyrists; that, if anything his own romantic image of life is far nearer to that of Yeats and Stephens, than to Bennett and Wells: that he is being disloyal to himself as an artist in trying to make his theory fit. And that is unforgiveable.

Of course, the fact is that *The Old Wive's Tale*, or *The Country House*, or *The New Machiavelli* do not interpret an English cup-final crowd at Wembley. To ask art to do things like that is to socialise it, and that precisely is what Mr. Corkery's nationalism means—the nationalisation of culture.

That is the core of the weakness of this approach. It is not a critic's approach. It is a politician's, and clearly one cannot find any common ground for discussion under such conditions unless one agrees on the nationalistic premisses. That the emotional content of, let us say, *The Portrait of the Artist as a Young Man* is genuine, Corkery will not admit! He says Joyce is "astray!" He suggests of Stephens that his idyllic picture is "watery gruel." He has a good word, but not complete approval, for T. C. Murray and Padraic Colum, but for nobody else. That O'Casey is "conscionable" to the nation he does not admit, because O'Casey satirises Nationalism! But, one leaves the position in disgust,—it is an impossible attitude which cannot allow a man to satirise what he honestly thinks deserving of satire. It is a position which leads Corkery into more than one baseness, more than one disloyalty. Typical is his scorn of Irish expatriates in America, when he says they do not even know the names of our Irish writers, and that those who do show an interest in Irish literature are of the type who "do not hasten home to do their bit when an insurrection is on," or "contribute to the funds of any political group," or contribute to "the funds of Irish cultural establishments." These are simply untrue statements.

3

One turns back to Corkery's later stories and to his *The Hidden Ireland* to see how these nationalistic premisses express themselves in theory and become effective in art. We may take a glance at the stories first, though their mould and technique is really not fully illuminated until we come to the other book

which is a history, in effect, of 18th century Ireland from the point of view of the penalised underdog.

Anyone who might turn from the silvery, twilit, Musset-note of *The Threshold of Quiet* to the stories in *The Stormy Hills* might wonder if it were the same writer. Here all but one of the tales are in the country: all of these in the wilder, more outlying country, often Gaelic-speaking. Strange, rough words we now hear, in place of those other words we noted in the novel: words like splintery; lumpish; awkward; scraggy; harsh; gigantic; fierce; glaring; bearlike. In two stories we meet the phrase, "a blob of a hand." The hands are often "heavy." The eyes are "glaring eyes," or are "fiercely buried" in a person or object. Always the hero is very tall, big, broad, glum—almost, indeed, the type of the strong silent Englishman, a feminine idea of masculinity. "He stood there, a solid piece of humankind, huge, bigfaced, with small round eyes, shrewd-looking, not unhumorous." "The two women looked at himself, alert yet lumpish before them, noted his body's girth and depth, and felt that 'trunk' was indeed the right word to use of such bodies." "When he could not find words to fit his thought his left eye would close tight, and one big tooth, that he still retained in his upper gum, would dig itself into his lower lip, until the struggling words came to him. And they noticed that his two hands had clenched themselves, long before he needed them clenched, to illustrate how he had tackled the reclamation of the sluggish marshlands of Dunerling East. . . . Every now and then the timbers of the heavy chair groaned beneath the movement of his awkward carcase." "Murty, on the other hand, was a monumental junk of humanity, huge and staunch, lavish in flesh, resounding in laughter." "The end of the drawing away was, however, that four gigantic figures were left grouped about the coffin." "The wind was singing and whistling—*screeching* was the word used by themselves—in the long brown, wiry, bog grass." "He stepped in slowly and heavily. . . ." "Satisfied at last he lifted himself to his full height, six feet two inches, flung backwards his massively domed head, hoisted the instrument, and etc. . . ." "His clab of a mouth hung open: his unshaven lip trembled." And so on. This gigantism, as if in rebellion against the more moderated, more quiet, often lyrical quality of the Anglo-Irish literature he dislikes—forgetting that it is also the note of his own best work—

can only be explained as an effort to come closer to the soil and the life of the soil. But that it is a convention just as much "astray" as the convention of the poetry he has put in the dock, and poetry has its own sweet liberties, is not likely to be denied by anybody who is familiar with the conventional Brutalist literature of the present day in America and England. Seeking after strength is a confession of weakness when the search produces a conventional idealisation that only impresses one with a sense of somebody blowing up a balloon.

The themes are not always informative but some are. They now seek after powerful drama and wild action and a setting of storm and harsh landscape—a further convention of this romantic idea of strength. But, what is significant, they seek, too, the historical Irish peasant fated to resurgence. The story *Carrig-an-Afrinn* will illustrate. Old Hodnett had long held a farm of that name, so-called after the Mass Rock where in Penal Days the hunted priests said Mass in secret. As he prospers, he sells it and buys Dunerling East, a rich pasture-land. But he leaves the old mountainy farm with misgivings: he has heard that angels hover over these old mass-rocks. He slaves to succeed in the new farm, and does succeed, but at the cost of the lives of his family. We see him at the end of his labours, still dreaming of that old mountainy farm—for he does not know the rock has been blasted by new road-makers to widen a road. In another tale, *The Wager*, we get the Big House from the view-point of the serf-peasants whose historical dignity is stressed heavily:—

You will remember there is a great difference between the Brosnans who lie in Kilvreedra and those in Muckcross Abbey. You might say 'tis only since yesterday, since they came down in the world, that the Brosnans are satisfied to lie in Kilvreedra. The Brosnans who lie in Kilvreedra were just poor common people like ourselves, but the ancient Brosnans, from time immemorial, they had been laid in the Abbey with the MacCarthys, the O'Sullivans, the O'Donoghues, the MacGillicuddys.

In *The Rivals* we get the rivalry between two folk story-tellers with the clan spirit well to the foreground.

One can see what the author has in mind. He will write stories that will be "conscionable to the nation"—if that means,

as it appears to mean, acceptable to the self-proud race-memory. He will write regionalist stories whose values are the values of the locale in which they are set. Unsure of himself as an artist *sans phrase* he will be at least sure of himself as an Irishman. Unhappily the self-consciousness of this approach, the deliberateness of it, has vitiated the spontaneity of the artist. The stories are mannered, the emotion is forced. The emotion may be "conscionable to the nation"—or may not, who knows that?—but it does not strike one as being in the least "genuine": it is pumped up.

In his book on *Synge*, Corkery spoke of writers who write for an alien audience: here he is writing for a native audience: in truth the genuine writer writes for no audience but himself. That is the rock on which the self-conscious Nationalist has broken. Art is a stern mistress. She brooks no rivals. It is possible, indeed, that in the course of a century, when we Irish have become a nation—as we are not yet a nation, the sediment of history not yet sunk to the bottom, the chemical elements not yet fully compounded—patriotic Irishmen may or may not read these stories with pride and other stories written to the same formula. So may Irish critics: but for the sake of Irish letters I hope not. Nor is it likely. We can still read novels like *Knocknagow* with a patriotic glow, but we are under no delusions—not even Mr. Corkery is under any illusion—as to their literary mediocrity (his own word).

The progression, rather the decline, from tender and whimsical humour, and the gentle lyricism, of the earlier work is evident. It is a sad example of a fine talent thwarted by theorising. Not that some of these stories have not merit. In this volume *The Stormy Hills* there is one story, *The Emptied Sack* that is as perfect and lovely as anything Turgenev ever wrote. There is lovely feeling in all of them, such as *The Lartys*. The descriptions, when free of mannerisms, are often masterly; as when in a silent night, with drama moving to tragedy in the foreground,

out on the reef a run of foam would catch the moon's rays for a moment, wriggle silver-bright, like an eel caught in the hand, and then go out, leaving the darkness vast and vacant.

All this deliberate pre-occupation with the historically-seen peasant arises from the conception of Irish history outlined in

The Hidden Ireland. It is a biggish book and it would take a bigger book to dispel the illusion of veracity it creates : for its arrangement of facts, and of half-facts, and of pious beliefs, by a man with an inadequate knowledge of Irish history, is tendencious in the extreme. It is a book which needed to be written. But it should have been written by a historian ; and as it stands—with no historian willing to engage his energies in challenging and disproving so many elaborate generalisations—it has had and will continue to have a profound effect on modern Irish (uncritical) thought. I give one or two statements from the book which will indicate the light-heartedness with which the author has handled whole periods of history :—

P. 153. Whatever of the Renaissance came to Ireland met a culture, so ancient, so widely-based, and well-articulated that it was received only on sufferance.

There is only one word for this : it may be inelegant, but it is the truth—and that word is, *Rubbish.*

P. 42. The poet scarcely took even poetic licence with the facts, as is the manner of Irish poets. He invented nothing ; he hardly even heightened the tint . . .

Of this one may say that if one does not laugh outright at it one might weep at such a perveid gullibility.

P. 49. (Speaking of the eighteenth century) The language was a gateway to a complete and unique civilisation. Possibly unique : but complete ?—

P. 152. The appeal of their (the poets') work was primarily to an audience cultured in literature.

The comment is fifty pages farther back :—

O'Bruadair, in 1692 . . . goes on to say that knowledge is now so corrupt in Munster that nothing but vulgar poetry is understood.

P. 58. There was a common culture flowing up and down between hut and Big House in Irish Ireland.

(Of this I do believe that a few students ought to spend a few years in the examination of the problem.)

Speaking of a sophisticated Vision poetry :

P. 141. How used those peasants to take in such a song ? One may safely reply, With perfect comprehension.

And one also may not.

These few excerpts, possibly too remote in interest for many

readers, will suggest the kind of picture the romantic novelist has made, for himself, of the immediate ancestors of the historical (?) peasant of his own stories. They are the descendants of greatness, and of a cultivated greatness. There every Irish writer parts company with Mr. Corkery.

We do not see the Irish farmer in this lambent light of reflected greatness. We know his immediate history—we can follow it back to Parnell, to the Land League, to O'Connell, his first popular leader (who, incidentally threw Gaelic overboard). We can follow his rise back to the Hedge Schools, where he was eager only to learn English and mathematics (to be able to keep accounts and measure his land), and Latin where the son of the house aimed to be a priest. We can follow the ideas that ultimately liberated him, back to Tone and the effect of the French Revolution. Behind that we cannot go. We look at him now, out in the fields that are his own : and we look back to Tone—and back into the impenetrable night of the Penal Days,—and he seems to us to be, thus regarded, a satisfactory unity. We hear him sing a song from Tom Moore and it takes us no farther back than all that. We hear him applaud a song of Lady Dufferin's and it takes us back no farther than all that. Only in the Gaelic fringe of Ireland do we hear notes that take us back behind the dark veil. But in that Gaelic fringe we see that life is, for all that, patterned exactly as it is in Meath or Limerick, only more colourfully, with more picturesque detail preserved out of the past, both near and remote. And where we have tried to puzzle out what really happened behind the darkness of the Penal Days we have—many of us—formed, in fact, the belief that the modern Ireland *is* a new and indigenous growth that began when the Irish folk, in disgust with this non-popular, aristocratic, effete, world (whose last dregs of culture lasted on into the nineteenth century for Mr. Corkery to slobber over as if it were the people's love instead of being the people's indifference), threw it all aside to build up, for themselves, and for the first time, a world of their own in the hovels to which that ancient curse, the Celtic state, had by its inefficiency reduced them.

To us the Irish fishermen and the Irish farmer and the Irish townsman is the result of about one hundred and fifty years struggle. And that, for history, is long enough for us. To us, Ireland is beginning, where to Corkery it is continuing. We have a sense of time, of background : we know the value of the Gaelic

tongue to extend our vision of Irish life, to deepen it and enrich it: we know that an old cromlech in a field can dilate our imaginations with a sense of what was, what might have been, and *what is not*; but we cannot see the man ploughing against the sky in an aura of antiquity! Colum, the poet, may do so, asking if the plougher is thinking of Pan, or Wotan, or Dana. The poet, so to speak, may do what he pleases. But as novelists, story-writers, dramatists, we know that the plougher is at most thinking of the Famine, which is a hundred years gone, and that his other thoughts that are too deep for him to express, weld him with such things (and Corkery rightly deals with such things) as the Rebellion of 1798, the priest-hunters, the hedge-schools, the mass-rock—but definitely *not* with the now dead and forgotten Celtic world.

So, outside of Corkery's short stories, and one or two plays, you will get nowhere else in the literature of Anglo-Ireland, for short call it Ireland, this grandiose note of the romantic peasant. Had he outlined his ideas twenty years sooner, in the period of the Celtic Twilight that he so despises, he would have had many more followers than he has now. But realism, which has been for some time the cry in Irish fiction, has been against him. The Abbey Theatre, with its superficial satires,—which he dislikes, for the wrong reasons, as much as we all dislike them for the right, or artistic reasons—has formed the public mind. He does, I think, influence our political evangels considerably: all that is behind our system of education in the modern Ireland, much that enthuses and supports all our more fervent politics, has come out of his books and his lecturings. But as far as literature is concerned, because he has not spoken to it in the only language it understands, the language of literature and literary values, he has no influence except the influence he rightly exercised at the beginning with his pleasant book of tales *A Munster Twilight*, and his delicate novel that he has, so greatly to our loss, not wished to repeat.

For that limitation of such an influence we may be thankful to the loyal insistence of such as Yeats and Moore and Stephens on "the high purposes of art." They are content to live or die by Beauty's suffrage, the only suffrage that counts, knowing that all other writers are those who, grown weak in her service, put above her praise some popular cry, and become in the end, the impoverishment of the people they think to serve.

BIBLIOGRAPHIES OF 1916 AND THE IRISH REVOLUTION.

V. JAMES CONNOLLY

Hand List, Notes, and Queries

James Connolly's bibliography presents so many difficulties that I think it well, as a preliminary to a proper bibliography, to set down now such information as I have been able to gather about his books and pamphlets, in the hope that some readers of these notes may be able to supplement them and to produce for record some of the missing items.

(1) *Erin's Hope : The End and the Means.* (1897).

This was first published in March or April 1897. It, and Lalor's *Rights of Ireland* (No. 12 below), are advertised in the *Shan Van Vocht* of 3 May, 1897, as having been just published at one penny each, though a note in the body of the paper refers only to *Erin's Hope* as just published, so that the *Rights of Ireland* may have been a little earlier. [It is, in fact. See note under (12) below]. The advertisement is in the name of the *Irish Republican Party*, 67 Middle Abbey Street, Dublin, and the note in the body of the paper refers to the *Irish Socialist Republican Party*, which is probably the more accurate description. I have been unable to trace a copy of this first edition.

I have an edition which appears to be the second :

Quarto: $9\frac{1}{2} \times 7\frac{3}{8}$: pp. 12. Light blue wrappers. Workers' Republic Pamphlets No. 1. Price one penny. I believe this to date from 1898. It contains on the last page a poem entitled *Erin's Hope*, "written on reading Comrade James Connolly's pamphlet." by Mary M. Johnston, Detroit, U.S.A.

I have also what seems to be the first American edition.

8vo: $8\frac{1}{2} \times 5\frac{1}{4}$: pp. 16. Slate grey wrappers. The Harp Library. Price five cents. Published by J. E. C. Donnelly, 749 Third Avenue, New York. It is undated, but there is a special two-page preface by Connolly, which has a reference to the International Socialist Congress at Paris in 1900. It cannot therefore be earlier than 1900, and it possibly dates from 1903 or after, when Connolly went to America. The preface, by the way, refers to the publication of the first part of the pamphlet in the *Shan Van Vocht* of November 1897. This was an error for November 1896. There are two other articles—apart from small notes—by Connolly in the *Shan Van Vocht*—*Nationalism and Socialism* in January 1897, and *Patriotism and Labour* in August 1897. These may have formed the basis of his *Socialism and Nationalism* (No. 4, below).

(2) *Home Thrusts, by Spailpin.* (1901).

Believed to have been published in Dublin. I have been unable to trace a copy, and it does not appear to have been reprinted.

(3) *The New Evangel.* (1901).

Believed to have been published in Dublin. I have been unable to trace a copy earlier than the reprint by the Socialist Party of Ireland about 1922/3.

(4) *Socialism and Nationalism*. (1901).

Believed to have been published in Dublin. I have been unable to trace a copy, and I am not aware of any reprint.

(5) *The Axe to the Root*. (1908 or 1909).

Believed to have been first published in America, and later reprinted in England. I have been unable to trace a copy earlier than the reprint in 1921 by the Irish Transport and General Workers' Union, which claims to be the first Irish edition, and which also includes a reprint of an article "New Wine in Old Bottles" from *The New Age* of 30 April, 1914.

(6) *Socialism Made Easy*. (1909).

First published in America. I have been unable to trace a copy of the first edition, which was published in Chicago by Messrs. C. H. Kerr & Co. I have a copy of an undated reprint, from the original plates, but post war. The first edition on this side appears to have been by the *Socialist Labour Press, Glasgow*, undated but apparently 1916 or 1917.

(7) *Labour, Nationality, and Religion*. (1910).

8vo: $8\frac{1}{2} \times 5\frac{3}{8}$: pp. 50. Light green wrappers. The "Harp" Library. Price 2d. Printed in Dublin by Trades' Union Labour at the Irish Ireland Printing Works, Temple Lane. 1910.

This has been several times reprinted [*e.g.*, in small 8vo. Slate grey wrappers, undated and without printer's or publisher's imprint, price 3d., possibly prewar, and in 1920, in different coloured wrappers, by the Socialist Party of Ireland, price 1/-].

(8) *Labour in Irish History*. (1910).

Sm. 8vo: $6\frac{3}{4} \times 4\frac{1}{4}$: pp. 216. Dark blue cloth. Dublin. Maunsel & Co., Ltd. 1910.

(9) *The Reconquest of Ireland*. (1915).

8vo: $8\frac{1}{2} \times 5\frac{3}{4}$: pp. iv + 64. Red wrappers. Published at Liberty Hall. 1915.

∴ (8) and (9) were reprinted in one volume in 1917 by Messrs. Maunsel, with an introduction by Robert Lynd, under the title *Labour in Ireland*.

(10) *The Legacy and Songs of Freedom*. (About 1918?)

Sm. 8vo: $7\frac{1}{8} \times 4\frac{1}{2}$: pp. 28. Pale pink wrappers. Published by the Socialist Party of Ireland, Liberty Hall, Dublin. This I believe to be the first complete edition of Connolly's various verses. It contains a prefatory poem by Maeve Cavanagh.

This book is possibly made up of his own contributions to two collections which he edited in America, believed about 1907.

(10) *Songs for Socialists*

and

(11) *Songs of Freedom*

of which I have been unable to trace copies.

Connolly also edited :—

(12) *The Rights of Ireland and the Faith of a Felon*, by James Fintan Lalor (1896).

This has an introduction by Connolly. I have been unable to trace a copy, but it is advertised as just published in the *Shan Van Vocht* of 2nd October, 1896.

(13) '98 *Readings*. 5 Parts. (1897-8.)

Part I, which is the only one I have succeeded in finding, has a two-page introduction by Connolly.

Note.—The object of the printing of these very imperfect notes is to set down, such as it is, what I have been able to ascertain, and to ask that any reader of these notes who can supplement, explain, or add to the information, even to the smallest extent, will write to me at Highfield House, Rathgar, Dublin. Any of the missing items lent to me will be returned at once after the particulars have been recorded.

P. S. O'HEGARTY.

BIBLIOGRAPHICAL NOTES

By M. J. MacManus

BOOK ILLUSTRATION.

MR. JAN POORTENAAR'S *Art of the Book and its Illustration* might be described as a treatise written by an expert for laymen. It goes back to the beginning of things when calligraphy gave way to typography and illumination to the woodcut, discusses the invention of paper and movable types, the earliest form of the printed page and its subsequent development, and, especially, the part that illustration has played in the creation of the book beautiful.

A chapter, specially contributed, by Professor Maurits Sabbe, Curator of the Plantin-Moretus Museum, Antwerp, deals comprehensively with the work of Christopher Plantin and his famous Press. Dr. Sabbe reminds us that the Museum at Antwerp contains, not only Plantin's library, but the only original early printing-press in existence in the world.

Another excellent chapter is one entitled "Printing in America." Here the survey is wide enough to include "The Whole Book of Psalms in metre, faithfully translated for the use, edification and comfort of the Saints, especially in New England," which was produced by the locksmith Stephen Daye in 1640, to the very latest productions of Mr. Bruce Rogers. Mr. Poortenaar pauses a moment to consider the influence of the private press upon typography and quotes Mr. Stanley Morison's somewhat caustic remark—apropos of modern developments in this sphere—that "it is the habit of the private-press gang to take themselves a little seriously."

No comment on this book would be complete without a reference to the illustrations. Of these there are no less than 110 in the text, apart from tail-pieces, and there are forty full-page plates, many of which are in colour. They are chosen not only for their beauty but for their individual significance in the history of the art of book-making. They include examples of the earliest title-pages and of primitive woodcuts as well as specimens of twentieth century fine printing, illustration and cover-design. There is a page from the Book of Kells and a reproduction of a magnificent Dublin binding of the seventeenth century.

A USEFUL REFERENCE BOOK.

In *Contemporary British Literature* (the use of the word "British" in this connection indicates the book's American origin) Mr. Fred. B. Millett has provided a useful book of reference. Following a critical survey of contemporary writers, in which the author makes a gallant effort to cover, in a section occupying

about a hundred pages, the whole field of contemporary literature in English, we are given no less than 232 "author-bibliographies" of authors living or only recently dead. These are compiled with a regard for thoroughness, and a cursory examination of some half-dozen would suggest that they are not lacking in accuracy. The four pages devoted to Mr. Yeats manage to compress an amazing amount of information, including a complete dated list of his works up to 1934, another list of books which contain critical or biographical notices of the poet, and a short biography which informs us, amongst other things, that Mr. Yeats now "composes seven or eight lines a day, an amount which once required a week." The only criticism of this useful work of reference that I feel called upon to make is that the selection of authors is a little capricious. To include, in the Irish section, Sean O'Casey, Douglas Hyde, Liam O'Flaherty and Lennox Robinson whilst omitting Seumas O'Sullivan, Austin Clarke, F. R. Higgins and Frank O'Connor argues a not sufficiently close acquaintance with Irish books and authors in recent years.

The Art of the Book and its Illustration. By Jan Poortenaar. (Harrap, 21s.).

Contemporary British Literature. By Fred. B. Millett. (Harrap, 10s. 6d.).

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MARSH'S LIBRARY.

Dr. Newport White's *An Account of Archbishop Marsh's Library, Dublin* (Hodges, Figgis & Co., 1s.), arrived too late, unfortunately, for a notice in this issue. I hope to review it fully in our next number.

BOOK REVIEWS

DRAMATIS PERSONAE. By William Butler Yeats. The Cuala Press. 10s. 6d.

Mr. Yeats's Autobiography is rather like Mr. Joyce's *Work in Progress*. It appears, bit by bit, in advanced periodicals, clings together in little books and eventually fattens into another volume. Like *Work in Progress*, too, each bit seems to resemble the last bit. We begin to have a horrible suspicion that Mr. Yeats is actually repeating himself. Most of the present instalment will appear vaguely familiar to Irish readers. It concerns principally his collaboration with George Moore in that ill-fated play, which has never been printed, *Diarmuid and Grania*. It may be that memories of *Hail and Farewell* still float about our minds. It may be that Mr. Yeats himself has told us all this for the *nth* time. At any rate we seem to be still going round and round, hearing the same extravagances, meeting "the old familiar faces."

To be fair, however, to Mr. Yeats, it is important to realise that he is writing these memories of Lady Gregory, Edward Martyn, Moore and himself for a new overseas public. This explains the grand tone which he adopts.

Some years ago, Free State Ministers were fond of recounting the adventures of Lady Gregory's "Seven Brothers" who no matter who objected to their rents, or coveted their possessions, were safe "because had one been killed, the others would have run down and shot the assassin."

In this country where ex-Ministers can be met at any street-corner, the grandeur of such Cabinet conferences is not so impressive.

Mr. Yeats devotes a short paragraph to the Irish literary revival for the benefit, no doubt, of the new English poetic school of which Mr. T. S. Eliot and himself are recognised as the foster-fathers. Ferguson and O'Grady are dismissed in a couple of contemptuous sentences and it is fairly clear that the present difficulties and doubts of the literary movement here no longer interest Mr. Yeats, who appears to have adopted the motto, "*après moi le déluge*."

Most of the book, however, is concerned with personal rather than literary matters. It is, in fact, a lengthy diatribe against George Moore. Unfortunately the pages lack that wit which alone renders such attacks interesting. Mr. Yeats has never possessed that gift which Moore had, the faculty of being able to laugh at himself. As a result, this answer to the immortal *Hail and Farewell* is mournful reading, despite some amusing gossip. We cannot, of course, quite blame Mr. Yeats. Those silver spoons which Moore tinkled so maliciously have deprived us, no doubt, of many fine poems and memories of Ormond. "Moore and Martyn were typical peasants," we are told. Moore was not really a gentleman, declares Mr. Yeats.

He lacked manners, but had manner; he could enter a room so as to draw your attention without seeming to, his French, his knowledge of painting suggested travel and leisure. Yet nature had denied to him the final touch: he had a coarse palate.

Forgetting that he had already told us that Martyn was also a peasant, Mr. Yeats tells us how "dear Edward" discovered the fatal secret.

When Moore abused the waiter or the cook, he had thought, "I know what he is hiding." In a London restaurant on a night when

the soup was particularly good, just when Moore had the spoon at his lip, he said: "Do you mean to say you are going to drink that?" Moore tasted the soup, then called the waiter, and ran through the usual performance. Martyn did not undeceive him, content to chuckle in solitude.

The evidence of a hotel manager and others is called by Mr. Yeats as further and unassailable proof of this very important matter.

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THE TWO SOURCES OF MORALITY AND RELIGION. By Henri Bergson. Macmillan & Co., Ltd. 10s.

It is not necessary to introduce the Author of "Creative Evolution"; his work is known throughout the world. Both he and Professor Whitehead have broken the academic mould into which Philosophy had settled itself before their influence became operative. This present work is certainly original in conception, brilliant in exposition, and notable for its defiance of many philosophic creeds.

The scheme of thought may be briefly stated thus. Bergson finds the two sources of Morality and Religion are "Social pressure" and "The impetus to love." In the case of Morality, the social pressure creates the primitive or natural morality. The two main lines of the evolution of animal life occurred with the Arthropodes and Vertebrates. At the end of the former, we have the instinct of insects, especially the Hymenoptera, and at the end of the latter the intelligence of man. The fundamental object of both intelligence and instinct is the utilization of implements. In the case of intelligence the implements are invented, and in the case of instinct they consist of the organs supplied by nature, and are thus immutable. These implements are, of course, designed for a certain kind of work; and it is obvious that the more specialization and division of labour is effected the more efficient is the work. Therefore, the Author concludes, social life is immanent, "like a vague ideal," in instinct and intelligence. Thus nature ordains social life and with it, rules and regulations, which in the case of the Hymenoptera are invariable, but in the case of the Human Community, subject to change. The former is a rule of nature, the latter of necessity. Thus Bergson contends that the more we delve down to the root of the various obligations to reach obligation in general the obligation takes on the peremptory character of instinct, though in the human community it is not strictly instinct, it is subject to variability and intelligence. It is what he calls "a virtual instinct, like that which lies behind the habit of speech." It is commonly known as the "Social Instinct." In its primitive expression, that is just at the point in evolution when human consciousness departed into its own line of progression, this social imperative possessed every phenomena of instinct, and consequently you had a form of primitive social life analogous to that of the insect; but experience has demonstrated that in human life there emerges from time to time exceptional types of men, who by virtue of some magical quality, it may be genius as we now conceive it, give an impetus to all human life, alter values, and become directory in thought and action. When Society emerged at the end of evolution in man

it was what Bergson calls a "Closed Society"—that is, its objective was concentrated on the primary purpose of living; it was broken up into small entities of tribes and clans, its loyalties were integrally towards its own organisation. It's "totality of obligations" did not differ essentially from that of the social organisations of the other great line of evolution—that of the Arthropodes. But now, Bergson says, having observed the emergency of this social life with its primitive, and almost instinctive obligations, "however much human society may progress, grow complicated and spiritualised, the original design, expressing the purpose of nature will remain." This is a message of profound import, and we believe of indubitable truth; it is of importance, since, if it is possible, to divine that primitive mind, we possess in the result the key to all subsequent moral and religious development. This effort of thought, in which there is a coalescence, of intuition, scientific knowledge and clear thinking Bergson has attempted.

We have said that the source of Morality is "Social pressure," and indicated that in primitive life it resulted in a "Closed Society"; but that by virtue of the influence of a few rare and adventurous minds, that closed society ended, and an open society began—and with it morality at one time static became dynamic, through the "impetus of love," through "aspiration" if you like. Thus you have the higher morality of the later development of the human species.

As to Religion, Bergson, also submits the same two-fold source. He says: "Primitive religions can only be called non-moral, or indifferent to morality, if we take religion as it was in the beginning and compare it with morality such as it became later on. Originally the whole of morality is custom; and as religion forbids any departure from custom, morality is co-extensive with religion." Then like the conception of Static morality, he perceives a Static religion, which is finally invaded by the agency of human creative force; and dynamic religion evolves. In this process of evolution and transition M. Bergson gives some of his most interesting, scholarly, and adventurous, thinking. His Chapters on Magic, and Religion, Totemism, Myth-Making, Greek and Oriental mysticism, the nature of God and Survival, are only comparable with the majestic and eloquent climax on Mechanics and mysticism, which in its noble recognition of the failure of reason, reaches out to demand some finite devotion to all that is conceivably left in the adventure of the human mind towards the unknown—the way of physical research, and thus he ends, this Testament of human failure by declaiming of men "Theirs the responsibility, then for deciding if they want merely to live, and intend to make just the extra effort required for fulfilling, even in their refractory planet the essential function of the universe, which is a Machine for the making of Gods."

D. H. C.

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MINUET. By F. C. Green. London: J. M. Dent & Sons, Ltd. 1935. Pp. 488. 15s. net.

Professor Green's *Minuet* is the most remarkable contribution to the study of the drama, the novel and the poetry of the eighteenth century, especially in France, that has appeared in our generation. For once the publishers' "blurb" understates rather than overstates.

The first section of the book "opens with a discussion of the Shakespearian and the Racinian conceptions of tragedy." Next comes an examination of Voltaire's debt to Shakespeare and of "the alleged influence of our domestic tragedy on the French contemporary drama."

The second section, if it does not exactly "break virgin soil," is "the first serious attempt . . . to offer a . . . parallel survey of French and English poetic contacts and ideas in the eighteenth century." The final section is devoted to the novel. Professor Green "demonstrates the originality and power of the so-called imitators of Richardson," and reveals Laclos and Rétif as ancestors of Proust and Gide.

Professor Green is not afraid of saying what he thinks, and has no respect for authority.

I have a slight bone to pick with him about Racine, and I may as well pick it now. He says that "Racine extracted from the manners of contemporary court society, not, indeed, the characteristic traits of that society, but those which are common to men and women of every class and climate." I agree with Maulnier who declares: "L'humanité de Racine n'est pas l'humanité de tous les jours, elle est celle de ce *jour détestable* dont parle le première scène de *La Thébaïde*, le jour de la catastrophe et de la mort." I doubt also if the death of Phèdre's body follows inevitably from her spiritual destruction. Before her death she undergoes a certain spiritual regeneration and confesses:

"Il faut à votre fils rendre son innocence.

Il n'était point coupable" (II 1617-18).

And she dies, as Maulnier says, "par dés espoir non par repentir," and rather as the widow of Hippolytus than as the erring wife of Theseus.

It is impossible to point out all the merits of the book in the space available. I will confine myself to a few of the points that have interested me particularly.

Professor Green damns as "completely false" the usual comparison of Marivaux with Watteau. "His heroines are drawn from the bourgeoisie and the provincial nobility." [I am not sure that Professor Green is fair to Watteau who was a realist in that at least his paintings are set in the real country of the neighbourhood of Paris, not in the artificiality of Versailles. Even more so Lancret.]

He denies the supposed influence of Lillo on Diderot and the *drame*. "It is quite unwarrantable to assume that Lillo's whole play appealed to him as good dramatic art. All his other pronouncements on the nature of the *genre sérieux* show conclusively, as do his own two plays . . . that he and Lillo are in essential respects utterly at variance.

Professor Green explodes Texte's "idea that Richardson changed the destiny of the French novel." He shows that *Pamela* and (Marivaux's) *Marianne* "differ in atmosphere, in conception, in style, in plot, and, indeed, in everything that makes them novels." "Were one to ransack all French and English literature it would be impossible to unearth two novelists more completely dissimilar than Marivaux and Richardson." The *écreintement* of Richardson is entertaining and complete. "*Pamela* is not naturally virtuous. She wears her chastity as she wears her Sunday frock, in a constant flurry lest somebody should soil it."

Professor Green refers to Richardson's "penchant for snug salaciousness. . . . He could make the binomial theorem sound indecent." "*Marivaux* is . . .

dramatic; Richardson is only melodramatic." "*Pamela* is completely lacking in subtlety or in psychological truth." "It is delightful to escape from *Pamela* with its odour of unaired closets and incipient masochism into the clean, virile atmosphere of Fielding's *Joseph Andrews*."

The treatment of Marivaux, Laclos, and Rétif de la Bretonne as novelists is, perhaps, the most interesting and original section of this most invigorating and iconoclastic book.

In the section on Poetry, the treatment of Boileau and Pope is refreshing. "It is time . . . to jettison the comfortable legend that Pope is the English Boileau and Boileau the English Pope."

The treatment of the French poets of the eighteenth century is the fullest that has yet appeared in English. If not so full as Faguet's treatment, it is more interesting on account of the comparisons Professor Green makes with English literature.

"Eighteenth century France had her first real contact with our poetry in 1758 when Colardeau published his adaptation of Pope's *Eloisa*." The detailed comparison with Pope is most suggestive. "Less romantic . . . than Pope, he has no words to express the Gothic seriousness, the sinister hush which broods over the English conception of the nunnery. From Prévost or Tencin he has learned how to picture the tragic conflict between sensual and divine love." Faguet finds in Colardeau "un précurseur du poème descriptif et du poème technique." Professor Green makes him the originator of the "héroïde." Of Bernis, Professor Green says: "Bernis is a boudoir poet of the Chaulieu school, yet without a trace of that profound emotion we find in the latter's most nonchalant verses." I think better of Bernis than this. His *Discours sur la Poésie* is a most remarkable document for its time, and his nature poetry shows real feeling. "To Thomson, Delille owed nothing. For Roucher Professor Green shows some enthusiasm. "*Les Mois* . . . was certainly suggested by the *Seasons* . . ." "The poets of the nineteenth century owed Roucher more than they could guess." He finds in *Les Mois* "images of pagan sensuality," and passages that "fore-shadow Lamartine's *Jocelyn*" and break ground "tilled by no poet since Remy Belleau."

The treatment of Léonard and Bertin is again rather niggardly. Léonard could in prose write such sentences as: "Quelques étoiles brillent dans la profondeur des nuées et s'éteignent subitement. La voûte du firmament se roule comme un vêtement noir"; and such lines as

"Pendant que le midi brûle au loin les campagnes."

"He influenced Lamartine, Hugo and Musset. His *Absence* is *Tristesse d'Olympio* fifty years before its time. The *Rendez-Vous* is pure Musset. *Les Regrets* is Lamartine's *Le Vallon* in first draft," as I pointed out myself long ago.

Faguet is rather scathing too! "Léonard est donc détestable dans l'idylle, meilleur et même lisible . . . dans le poème philosophique; enfin il a un vrai talent pour décrire la nature." He points out that some passages of *Les Voix de la Nature* are "du Lamartine, quand Lamartine est mauvais; et être du Lamartine quand . . . Lamartine est mauvais, c'est déjà quelque chose." He finds in *L'Automne* lines almost worthy of Hugo.

Of Bertin Professor Green says that, occasionally, he "restores to France those qualities of sincerity, dignity, and tenderness which vanished from her

poetry with Ronsard and from her theatre with Racine. [He is unfair to the poets of the early seventeenth century !]. Just as after Léonard we may expect a Lamartine, so when Bertin passes we shall not be surprised to encounter a De Musset."

To Gilbert, too, justice is done. *Le Dix-huitième Siècle* is "without exception the most scathing, the most pertinent, and the most illuminating criticism of the *philosophes* and of the social abuses of the age ever penned by a French eighteenth century writer." Professor Green finds him superior to Churchill and comparable only to Cowper.

Thomas is not mentioned. But his *Ode sur le Temps*, according to Faguet, "nous fait penser aux *Entretiens solitaires de Brébeuf*, aux *Harmonies poétiques de Lamartine*." Thomas uses the expressions: "l'océan des âges," and "O Temps, suspends ton vol," and has suggestions also of Hugo and Musset.

I have done bare justice, I fear, to this remarkable and excellent book, with its fearless, and carefully documented criticism of accepted doctrine and its original contributions to every field of discussion. No student of eighteenth century French literature can afford to neglect it.

T. B. RUDMOSE-BROWN.

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EPITAPH ON GEORGE MOORE. By Charles Morgan. Macmillan. 5s. net.

Some years before George Moore died he invited Mr. Morgan to study with him to be his biographer. To complete the material for his life-story he wished him to have access to a certain series of letters to a single correspondent. Unfortunately this correspondent has refused to let Mr. Morgan see these letters, and rather than betray the confidence of his friend he has regretfully abandoned the project of writing an official biography: he has published instead, this essay in criticism, the value of which lies in the fact, as he says himself, "that I knew him day in, day out, during his last years, and in a relationship which because I was less than half his age and so was detached from his former controversies, enabled him to speak to me sometimes 'out of his part,' as he might not have been able to speak even to his oldest friends." George Moore was never popular either as a man or a writer. To even his most devoted and faithful friends he often behaved disgracefully, and, as Mr. Morgan says, did his utmost to "make a desert of his personal life." He was an enigma to most people, at one moment talking like an inspired sage and the next like a silly schoolboy out to shock. Mr. Morgan explains this duality by the theory that both in his life and art there was a continuous struggle between the youthful Moore, "the unregenerate adolescent" whom he himself in jest named "Amico Moorini" and the later man of genius. This Amico Moorini who wrote "Pagan Poems," "Flowers of Passion" and alas! many passages in his earlier novels, was for ever cropping up in paragraph or phrase in even his latest works; hence his preoccupation with ceaseless and untiring correction. The low fellow would also often thrust his quarrelsome and flashy interpolations into the conversation of "Le Maître" of Ebury Street, thus baffling and often hurting his friends. Many artists have of course something of a dual personality, some unanalysed element of stupidity or sentimentality

that tries to spoil their work ; but the remarkable thing about Moore was his accurate awareness of his own " Mr. Hyde " and consequent ability to delete ruthlessly as he grew older, his more unpleasant manifestations. Mr. Morgan says much of interest on why the general public has never taken to Moore's writings. Part of the answer is that he was what the English call " French." " To speak of a woman as if she were a goddess—that in England is pardonable . . . but to see her with the eye of a connoisseur—ah no ! that is French." With " Esther Waters " Moore gave liberty to the English novel and in his later works in which " the narrative moves forward like a clear river under a calm sky " he gave it discipline. This is his achievement. I have quoted enough to show that this essay is full of those felicitous turns of phrase one might expect from the author of " The Fountain." Mr. Morgan writes of his subject with affection and a sensitive discernment which gives his little monograph a vivid quality often completely absent in more pretentious biographies. M. G.

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THE POWYS BROTHERS. A Study by Richard Heron Ward. With Three Portraits by Gertrude M. Powys. John Lane. 7s. 6d. net.

The longest of Mr. Heron Ward's essays is on John Cowper Powys, whom he considers to be the most important of these three talented brothers. It is more panegyric than criticism, for the writer is completely under the spell of the Wizard of Glastonbury. In spite of an unbridled and rather too adjectival enthusiasm—" What a Novel, what a moving, thrilling, mystical; tragical, maniacal, magical, creation of purest inspiration " ! Mr. Ward very well understands this curious philosopher-novelist, who is an original and imaginative writer of undoubted power. He created in " The Glastonbury Romance " a fantastic world on a grand scale, which conforms perfectly to the laws of its own being. In addition to a fresh and inspired vision of life, he possesses another qualification which tempts one to call him a great novelist (a temptation to which Mr. Ward frequently succumbs), namely his compassionate tenderness for, and consequent understanding of every sort of human being, and indeed of all created life. There is a tremendous " cast " both in " The Glastonbury Romance " and in " Jobber Skald." Old men, young children, lovers, haters and all the procession of clerks, clergy, artisans, capitalists, gipsies, harlots, lawyers and doctors that are part of every country or seaside town. They are all convincing and all live " in the round " ; and are as indissolubly bound up with the places where they live and move as are the characters of Emily Brontë or of Thomas Hardy. If the reader succumbs to this novelist's fascination at all, he will find himself living in the atmosphere of the Glastonbury or Weymouth of the novels, and getting to know its activities, streets and pubs so well, that they grow more real to him than the London or Dublin of his own habitation. In addition to this enchanted familiarity, there is a quality of excitement in these novels which in the " Glastonbury Romance " reaches its climax in the pageant scene. It is difficult to understand why so many critics dismissed these books as dull and unreadable on their first appearance. They might be abused for many reasons, but emphatically not on the score of dullness. One can only conclude that the average reviewer,

numbed by the average novel of mere photographic realism, takes fright at any new imaginative conception. Mr. Ward insists that John Cowper Powys attaches more importance to his philosophy than to his novels and quotes him as saying: "To the Devil with art. My writings are simply so much propaganda, as effective as I can make it for my philosophy of life." Well, so they may be; but it is by his strangely beautiful literary style, with its long but subtly constructed sentences, its unexpected imagery, and its unerring use of the right word, that he will live, if any twentieth century writer lives; though his philosophy which is a blend of Earth-worship, Epicurus, Pater and Hardy, with a garnish of his own, has probably brought comfort and help to thousands of readers unconcerned with art.

The essay on T. F. Powys is less successful. Mr. Ward has no natural sympathy with this esoteric author's work, which might be described as a counterblast to the "back-to-nature" school of thought. Mr. Ward admits to the excellent writing in such books as "Mr. Tasker's Gods" and "Unclay" but their underlying ethic seems to him to be perverted and distasteful. "An exquisite and dangerous flower" is how he describes "Unclay." Its devastating irony seems on the whole to have escaped his notice. If an embittered scepticism is a grave drawback in a writer would Jonathan Swift and many others ever have survived? But as Mr. Ward makes abundantly clear all through this book, "art" makes no appeal to him without uplift of some kind. It is the seer "the logos-utterer" that he values in John Cowper Powys more than the stylist. The fact that Freud is Mr. Theodore Powys's favourite philosopher reduces him to the status of "mere artist," which of course he is,—but not "mere"!

Of Llewellyn Powys Mr. Ward writes with affectionate understanding, and as in the essay on J. C. Powys says much that shows that he values this writer's pure and lovely prose, which is at its best in the long essay form of "The Verdict of Bridle-goose" and "Skin For Skin." This author has from youth suffered from the same terrible disease that afflicted Katherine Mansfield and D. H. Lawrence, and in common with these two writers he is one for whom the visible and tangible beauty of the world exists with a fiery reality, all the more intense since he has been for years under sentence of death. His writings have a poetic sensitiveness and lyrical grace which touch the heart. As in the case of Lawrence there is in his less good work, a touch of shrill fanaticism, attributable to his being a sick and suffering man. Mr. Heron Ward insists too much on the wrong-headedness of his beliefs and his "narrowness of outlook." He is a writer of great charm and infinite fancy, and at his best can take his place with the great English essayists.

The remarkable thing about these three brothers is that each in an entirely individual way is a master of English style and it is by this that they will live and not by their philosophies which hold little of a startling originality. Mr. Ward has the makings of a critic if he corrects his tendency to floridity and over-emphasis. His enthusiasm for the Powys family may antagonise some readers by its very excess, although I believe that better critical works are made on the whole from intense appreciation than from a cold and unfeeling indifference.

M. G.

LOUIS D'ORLEANS (1372-1407). By F. D. S. Darwin. London: John Murray. 1936. Pp. xxi + 254. 10s. 6d. net.

The murder of Louis d'Orléans exercised a profound influence on the whole course of English history. That is not, perhaps, as novel an idea as Mr. Darwin thinks. "For over three centuries the repercussions of that crime were felt, chiefly in England, in an ever-growing crescendo—the wars of Armagnacs and Burgundians, the cynical intervention of Henry V, the martyrdom of Jeanne d'Arc, the final ejection of the English, the resultant and fatal weakening of the Lancastrian dynasty, the Wars of the Roses, the short-lived triumph of the Yorkists, their failure at Bosworth, the rule of the Tudors, the English Reformation, the murder of Charles I. . . ."

It is a tall order! But it can be justified. It is an even taller order to picture (albeit with reservations) Orleans as a patriot and a wise statesman, a scholar and a knight.

"The expectancy and rose of the fair State."

Mr. Darwin shows that none of the sovereigns of the House of Valois reached old age, and draws the conclusion that "the dynasty presented unmistakeable signs of degenerescence" (*sic*!). But some of the younger sons attained old age:

Jean Duke of Berry, son of King Jean died in 1416 aged 76.

Charles Duke of Orléans, son of Louis, lived till 73. His younger brother

Jean Comte d'Angoulême lived till 63.

Jean Comte de Nevers, son of Philippe le Hardi, lived till 76.

Mr. Darwin quotes:—"Not only did Charles VI descend from two brothers Louis IX and Charles of Anjou who married two sisters . . . but, from this date and for more than two centuries, not a single royal marriage occurred outside the family of St. Louis."

Surely this is an exaggeration, even if "royal" be taken in the narrow and strict sense. Of course, if "the family of St. Louis" means not his descendants but the Capetians, the exaggeration merely becomes a truism; it would have been difficult in Western Europe to find a bride not descended from some Capetian or other! In any case several of the kings who came between St. Louis and Charles VI were not the forbears of the latter.

But the picture is well-painted. The book is scholarly and accurate and adds much to our knowledge of the period. The chapters on the libraries of Orleans, Philippe le Hardi of Burgundy and Charles V are most interesting. The illustrations are excellent. Even the genealogical table is correct. I should have liked to see the Berry and Bourbon genealogies added to it. Jean, Duke of Berry, the King's uncle, had two daughters by his Armagnac wife: Bonne, married first to Amédée VII of Savoy (by whom she was the mother of the Schismatic Pope Felix V), and secondly to Bernard VII of Armagnac, by whom she was the mother of Bonne de Berry, wife of Charles of Orleans (the poet), son of Louis; and Marie whose second husband was Philippe d'Artois, Comte d'Eu, great grandson of Charles of Valois, and also a direct male descendant of Louis VIII, and whose third husband was Jean I Duke of Bourbon, son of Louis II of Bourbon and cousin of King Charles VI. The index is unsatisfactory.

T. B. RUDMOSE-BROWN.

SELECTED POEMS. By A.E. Macmillan. 5s.

A.E. AN ESSAY. By W. C. Clyde. The Moray Press. 3s. 6d. (Foreword by Seumas O Sullivan).

At a time when a prosperous materialism lay on the Victorian Age like a heavy dinner, it is not strange that the poetic mind began to occupy itself with fairyland and with any other age and land rather than its own. Modern poetic doctrine condemns this as escape, a refusal to face up to the limitation of circumstances and beat them into an art medium and automatically damns Tennyson, Morris, Rossetti, Swinburne, the younger Yeats and A.E. Modern poetic art, however, has gone to school to the realistic novelists, and laid aside its faculty of intuition for that of observation. It has accepted the limitations of its time ; but, as I see it, the acceptance is merely a further limitation. To express the conscious is admittedly to work within one's own age and from one's observation ; but to express the unconscious, and this, surely, is primarily the function of the poet, is to be of all ages. For all ages are in the unconscious, as psychology is just beginning to discover ; and may be shaken into the conscious for a moment by the wavering of an image or a rhythm that sets the race memory stirring. The business of any art is not to be beautiful, but is, as is the business of religion ; to help us to know ourselves. The special business of poetry, if we are to assign to it any special business which, indeed, I do not, as that would be but another limitation, seems to be concerned less with time than with eternity. It was to this aspect of the poet's trade more than to any other that A.E. was by nature and vision peculiarly fitted.

One can offer reasons for the biased genius of the other Victorians. We can call it "escape," and leave it at that. Or we can see in it the working of the law of change "an age desiring its opposite." Being a believer in the law of change, I incline to the latter suggestion ; and see in the mannered, jewelled verse of Tennyson and the others, the unconscious desire of their time fulfilling itself through dream, the preparation of the pendulum for the backswing. All that preoccupation with the dim lands may have been accident of course ; "the murmuring courts where the shapes of sleep convene" be but poetic allegory, pleasant because it was new. But it was strange that just at the end of the phase, when the dreamy verse was wearing thin, that two young Irish poets should arise and infuse it with new life, one with a vigorous music and definite imagery, and one, A.E., with the mythical wisdom that comes from direct vision. Not being a social philosopher, I leave it at that.

Perhaps because he was more occupied with inner than with outer aspects, A.E. did not concern himself very much with the form of his verse. He was content to use the verse forms of his elders without much allowance for his individual music. The spirit, with him, was the important thing. If it broke through here and there to suffuse the mind, he was satisfied. His own mind was so susceptible to the spirit that he could build a vision from a word, a world in a cadence. Because he found in the poets who went before him, some kinship of vision, he took their music forms as a natural inheritance, just, in fact, as a man takes over his father's house : and, because the creative stream in him was divided between poetry and painting, he never felt, overwhelmingly, the urge that besets men of his stature who have but one outlet for their personalities to alter and widen their inheritance until it expresses them in full.

Our generation, having turned to unemphatic prose rhythms, does not yield to A.E. a full measure of justice. Mr. Clyde, in a full-charged essay, says

that "the publication of a new volume of poems by A.E. was not regarded as front page news." I don't know that the publication of a volume by any poet, except, perhaps, Mr. Kipling, is front page news. The discerning, however, will find in this book verse in which the musical and visual qualities are blended in a perfect wholeness. They will sense behind it the all but mythic figure of a man whose song, as Seumas O Sullivan says in his preface to Mr. Clyde's essay, had its fountain in the heaven-world. And, perhaps, some will believe, as I have come to believe, that it was this figure gave the final push-off to a materialistic self-assured era and set it in full swing towards its opposite.

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THE YEAR'S POETRY. Compiled by Gerald Gould, Denys Kilham Roberts, John Lehmann. The Bodley Head. 6s. net.

A TREASURY OF MODERN POETRY. Edited by R. L. Mégroz. Pitman. 7s. 6d. net.

THE FABER BOOK OF MODERN VERSE. Edited by Michael Roberts. Faber & Faber. 7s. 6d. net.

ECHOS' BONES. By Samuel Beckett. Europa Press. 3s. 6d. net.

THE VAMPIRE. By Herbert E. Palmer. Dent. 3s. 6d. net.

Anthologies should be welcome chiefly, I think, for their very arbitrariness. Poems grouped in support of an editor's formulations of life or of a certain trend of thought seem to take light from their proximity of sympathies. Of the anthologies before me, the poems of 1935 seems the least impressive. And that, I suppose, is because it wants to wear a face for everybody. All but all of the big men are there, and there are many fine poems. Mr. Yeats is well represented; Mr. Higgins, too, with a gay plunge into the out-of-doors called 'The Boyne Walk.' Separately, each poem would, I fancy, ring the bell. Taking the book as a whole, it leaves a residue of dissatisfaction which, for all I know, may be but a personal reaction to something like over-stimulation. As the book, however, really is a gleaning of the year's best poetry, I would recommend it to anybody at the money.

The other anthologies on my list are a different story. Mr. Mégroz draws from a period beginning 1890; but chiefly from the last twenty years. He has thrown his net wide; and gathered in a great deal of almost unknown verse. Surprisingly, however, he has not given place to many of the better known younger writers. Much of the poetry of, say, W. H. Auden, Laura Riding, Robert Graves, of the late Wilfred Owen, being perfect off-shoots of their kind, should surely have had notice. And T. E. Hulme! And Herbert Read! Against these omissions, he can show admissions that will, in the opinion of many readers, help to reduce the balance in his favour. The book, at any rate, shows a definite design of personality working through tradition. It is this, perhaps, which, inclines him to give so much prominence to Ireland. Many of our poets are very fully represented.

Mr. Roberts would deny representation to many of the poets Mr. Mégroz praises. His attitude, however arbitrary it may appear, I welcome for psychological reasons. It leaves him room to make—in a brilliant prefatory essay, and, afterwards, by choice of poems—a very lucid statement of what now appears to be the chief trend of modern poetic thought. Of the seventy poets Mr. Mégroz represents, Mr. Roberts represents only six. That in a collection of thirty-six.

And still most of the poems chosen are alive, not with eccentricity, but with a creative technique that seems to knight the everyday shapes of life that are its subjects. The eccentric, indeed, is there ; and the very eccentric ; alive and kicking. And that is just as it should be. "The poet," Mr. Roberts says, "has a right to play, and the reader to enjoy that play. The solemn attacks on the more riotously comic of Mr. Cummings' poems are themselves ridiculous." There is a great delight in watching experiment. In this book there is much experiment ; and a very great deal of it is successful. A startling thing is the number of good poems written by very young men ; a settling thing is to find that the old wine is still there, and the bottling not too new. The phase of the bad eccentric, indeed, seems to be worked out. Surface strangeness, once the delight of the very young, seems here to have given way to a technique based on older, more natural speech-rhythms. The influence of Hopkins—with whom Mr. Roberts begins his selection—is more apparent in poets 'in the thirties' than in those still in their twenties. Hopkins, I am sure, has been responsible, in the way of example, for as much bad verse as either T. S. Eliot or Ezra Pound. Temptation lies in the lovely perilous poise of his verse. It grasps the mind like a hawk. But he brought it, I am sure, to its very limit. Another twist and the life would leave it. Those young men seem wisely to avoid his lure. Here and there I fancy I find his run and his rein ; but it is not so apparent as to be queried. Perhaps Hopkins is, now, fully absorbed into the genius of the language ; and for its good. Certainly for its good.

There is some very good work here by Mr. Yeats, Pound and Eliot. I would mention many others, Read, Empson, Hulme, Graves, Laura Riding, Edith Sitwell, if there was space for detail. As it is, I can only say that this anthology is worth much more than the money. All but the work of Hopkins has been drawn from a period beginning 1910.

I am somewhat bewildered by Samuel Beckett. Bewildered, but impressed. Here is "The Vulture."

'dragging his hunger through the sky
of skull shell of sky and earth

stooping to the prone who must
soon take up their life and walk

mocked by a tissue that may not serve
till hunger earth and sky be offal'

I am successful, I fancy, in my reaction to that. The last line has a gigantic wing. That poem and "Enueg I," and "Enueg II" are real to me. The flight from emotion in "Enueg I" is a very real thing. Mr. Beckett finds himself, I think, in those poems. And perhaps in 'Alba.' Others, because of his idiom,—a very private, personal idiom—I am not at all sure of. There is a confusion of accidental phenomena that leaves me adrift. Adrift ; but, in spite of myself, impressed.

Mr. Palmer is always Mr. Palmer. And sometimes a first cousin to Blake. The Old Testament, of course, plays a large part in the fundamental rhythms of each. But there is some other kinship which I cannot quite fathom. What

one calls God, the other might call the Devil. Or *vice versa*. I am not quite sure. I am only sure that there is some deep kinship in their ways of saying ; and that, very often, I get from Herbert Palmer what I imagine might come from Blake if the twentieth century were shouting about him. "Through Curtains of Darkness," for instance. Blake, too, might have attempted some, at least, of "Vanity Fair." This book has many fine things. What comes through, however, in chief, is the impression of a striking personality, a man in search of God

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POEMS. By Louis MacNeice. London : Faber and Faber. 6s.

The poetry of Mr. MacNeice distills what must surely be the last drop out of denial. "I think things come to an end, the soil is stale," he says, and his is the familiar dilemma of the modern poet, aware that great poetry proceeds from faith not from scepticism, but unable like most of his contemporaries to believe in anything. But passionate denial is far preferable to false affirmation, and in Mr. MacNeice's verse the retreating tides of belief leave behind a shingle that is dry but not shapeless, not without a certain beauty of its own.

Though the great song return no more
There's keen delight in what we have :
The rattle of pebbles on the shore
Under the receding wave.

So a few years ago wrote Mr. Yeats, who has salvaged from the wreck of the nineteenth century a passionate faith in beauty and forged for himself that belief in the visionary which, as Mr. MacCarthy has said, "he has striven all his life to defend against reason."

The familiar triumvirate of modern poets, Spender, Auden and Day Lewis, attempts to find in the aspirations of Communism fuel to stoke the poetical fire : an attempt only half successful, for the belief of Shelley and Wordsworth in the ideals of the French Revolution (an obvious parallel) arose out of an essential faith which went far deeper than the political surface. But Mr. MacNeice, an Ulsterman, will not swallow the Communist potion against despair, and shrugs his shoulders at the multiple menace of the world :

Come then all of you, come closer, form a circle
Join hands and make believe that joined
Hands will keep away the wolves of water
Who howl along our coast. And be it assumed
That no one hears them among the talk and laughter.

His verse has wit and thrust and sudden flashes of beauty, as in the impressionism of this stanza from "Morning Sun" :

And the street fountain blown across the square
Rainbow-trellises the air and sunlight blazons
The red butcher's and scrolls of fish on marble slabs,
Whistled bars of music crossing silver sprays
And horns of cars, touché, touché, rapiers' retort, a moving cage,
A turning page of shine and sound, the day's maze ;

lines that give the lie to his own assertion, in an essay on poetry in "The Arts To-Day," that "changes in poetic technique are on a level with the changes each season of women's fashions in dress." Only now and then does the merely contemporary—the modish obscurity or the already well-worn imagery—poke up its perky head for an isolated line, even for a whole poem ("To a Communist," which for all its acid point is not poetry at all, and the rather silly "Cuckoo"). The longest pieces are the best, notably "Valediction," a fine repudiation of the traditional glamour of Ireland, and the dialogue between town- and country-dweller called 'An Eclogue for Christmas,' which contains a satirical passage on the county gentry recalling Siegfried Sassoon: "None of them can endure . . .", he says:

Without the bandy chairs and the sugar in the silver tongs
And the inter-ripple and reasonance of years of dinner-gongs;
Or if they could find no more that cumulative proof
In the rain dropping off the conservatory roof.

The dialogue closes with a wry perfection:

Goodbye to you, this day remember is Christmas, this morn
They say, interpret it your own way, Christ is born.

D. C. S.-T.

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STUDIES IN EARLY CELTIC NATURE POETRY. By Kenneth Jackson, M.A.
Cambridge: University Press. 1935. 12s. 6d.

Mr. Jackson, a young English scholar (whose interest in Ireland however, has not been merely academic and who realises from wanderings about her hills and woods what was the soul behind early Irish poetry), has led us in this handsome book back along some well-beaten paths, for those who have read Meyer and Hyde, as, for example, on that path to where Marbhán had his 'sheiling in the wood' (Mr. Jackson calls it a hut however), or to where the young Finn is found making his first verse on "May Day, de fair season, perfect is colour then; blackbirds sing a full lay if there be a slender beam of day." Most of our favourite early Irish poems are here, and it is a delight to a dabbler in this field to have them so beautifully printed and arranged, even if Mr. Jackson as a scholar-translator feels it necessary to alter sometimes the Authorised version.

But this is pre-eminently a work of scholarship from a distinguished Fellow of Cambridge and the justification of long research work. This is why we must pass on from admiration of the poetic specimens given (except that we must hail as superior or rather more humanly touching than most of our Irish stuff the Nature poem of Hywel ab Owein Gwynedd on p. 194). The Contents are divided into Hermit, Elegy, and Fenian poetry, Gnostic and Seasonal poetry, and the problems of Welsh Nature poetry. Many Welsh and Irish poems are given and a long introduction gives the fruits of Mr. Jackson's researches and judgments on the remarkable flowering of vernacular verse among the kindred Celts of Erin and Britain from the ninth to the twelfth century. In this undoubtedly there was much delicate art and real inspiration, but we must admit that however interesting

it may be gnomic poetry and prose, which form a section here, are very dull and one cannot help being proud that the Welsh were more given to it than the Gaels. On Irish "Hermit poetry" from 800 to 1000 A.D., our author remarks that but for one thing it is probable that there would have been none of it; that thing "is the great Irish anchorite movement of the eighth to the tenth centuries reconstructed by Dr. Robin Flower." To this movement may be attributed the delightful pieces that many of us know, such as the *Marbhán* poem, one or two of the Colmcille poems and some of the charming stories of the piety of the saints for the creatures of the wildwood, a Nature poetry which gives early Christian Ireland a unique place in medieval literature.

E. C.

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EVANGELICAL METHODISM, CALVINISM, AND DISINTEGRATION

INTRODUCING THE ARNISONS. By Edward Thompson. Macmillan. 7s. 6d.

WILLIAM COWPER AND THE EIGHTEENTH CENTURY. By Gilbert Thomas. Ivor Nicholson and Watson. 15s.

The publishers' blurb inside the dust-cover of Edward Thompson's novel is worth quoting:—

"There is a submerged England that is nonconformist and puritan. It swam up once into the main stream of our life, long ago, when Cromwell was its statesman and Milton its poet. Since then, outside business and religion, it has made no appearance in any national activity that matters—art, literature, drama, politics have been outside its ken, the province of the world and the devil. It has accepted it as God's will that it should be unconcerned with them and occupied only with spiritual issues . . . This England, in its stupidities and unconscious heroisms, is the theme of Mr. Thompson's new novel, which opens in the deceptive summer of Nonconformity and Liberalism, forty years ago."

That seems to give a very accurate description of the atmosphere of *Introducing the Arnisons* which, adds the author, in its incidents "is neither wholly fact nor wholly fiction, but built up of both." To which should be added that it is excellently, at times magnificently written, in a style that is as fluent as it is individual and idiomatic, supplying further proof of Edward Thompson as one of our greatest living prose writers. But some readers will be, and already have been, incensed by the novel. For it abounds in caricature, is super-censorious, and is very up and down in its movements,—lyrical, rhapsodical, witty, pleasantly humorous, and savagely satirical—altogether without stability. As a work of art, as a pure novel, it seems to fail. It has got very little plot, no finality, and one of the main characters is too mixed into the author; and another, the caricatured Uncle Hamlet, is inconsistent (and caricatures should not be inconsistent) while two or three of the minor characters are only puppets. But as a red-hot chunk of moody writing it turns most modern novels into blocks of ice; and as a picture of the drab aspects of Victorian industrialism and the decaying life of the great evangelical and puritan movements, well, it's a downright hair-raiser. Bad novel or not it holds the attention to the end. In your excitement

you will skip a little, perhaps, and then go back and read and re-read and re-read. For it is full of things like this :

Claptrap, you say ? Well, that all depends on how much you are willing to pay for your 'gestures'—will you *die* for them ? Will you, when you feel the Spirit of the Highest, for the sake of serving that Spirit give up ease and reputation, and waste your life on trivial and even silly little people who are never going to get anywhere ?

The passage doesn't make quite clear whether the getting anywhere refers to this life or the next. But probably it refers to the next, the negative journey generally plain enough—to the region of Hell, or Eternal Death, as this characteristic sulphuric gem from another part of the book bears witness :

The chant glowed and gloomed through shimmering lava-fires, till it rose to solemn exultation of assurance. The Deity was placated, voices asserted : the peril was passing.

But not every Wesleyan Methodist service was like that, and we have a humorous-pathetic picture of the scholarly "local preacher" pleading from a pulpit, which, though he knew it not, was much too everyday to hold him :

He would bend over the side, a graceful willow above those exceedingly shallow waters, and assure the grocer who kept a village shop which sold string, stamps, stationery and some literature (*Horner's Penny Stories*), 'And *you*, my friend, *you* are thinking of Browning's picture of the Risen Lazarus, and you are saying—"

The complete opposite was Brother Jaggars who roared out at a local preachers' meeting :

"What's all this about your B Hays and your Hem Hays ? Hi'm a B Hay and a Hem Hay ! Hi'm Born Hagain and Marvellously Haltered !"

The chief fault of the book is that the delineated 'stupidities' rather over-balance the 'heroisms.' It is almost too caustic, too satirical, with too many hypocrites strutting through the pages. And you are puzzled a little at times as to what Edward Thompson's deepest feelings really are about the church which fathered him, especially when he completely washes out the satire by a dazzle of pure poetry, like this :

A body once broken for mankind carries its scars for ever, lovelier than any beauty seen or sung on land or sea . . . And the generations who have been ground down and, one after another, pressed into the dust after their hot weary little day had finished, have been caught up—*rapt*—into an almost intolerable ecstasy of gladness !

Less lyrical but almost equally effective is the passage which criticises a well-known Methodist public school (one which none of its "old boys" will read without a throb of emotion) :

The lives lived by Grammand boys have been often stupid and ineffectual, but they have been sacrificial. Of this proof was given in

the World War, when a larger proportion of the School's sons died and a smaller proportion won 'distinction' than in the case of any other school in Britain. You may call that a fine record or a merely silly one. Perhaps it is juster to call it a characteristically Methodist one. In this case it carries nothing to be ashamed of. The lives went; and the name and rumour of majestic service were denied them.

At the opposite pole to Edward Thompson's book, though dealing more or less with the same subject, is Gilbert Thomas's *William Cowper and the Eighteenth Century*. While both writers have complete knowledge of English Evangelicalism, the attitude is different, for Gilbert Thomas approaches with critical sympathy certain prejudices and beliefs which in the light of present-day revelations sometimes set Edward Thompson gnashing his visionary and intellectual teeth. Edward Thompson is the wild and fluent Irishman (whatever he may say about his nationality) but Gilbert Thomas is the cautious, fact-laden Englishman. Not that his book isn't beautifully and arrestingly written. It is all that; but the circle he is moving in has been too ploughed to permit of somersaults. Edward Thompson is out to destroy the last ramparts of humbug and intellectual and moral cruelty buttressing a church which he nevertheless seems to fundamentally admire; while Gilbert Thomas seeks to sympathetically recreate the inceptions of that Church and deal spiritually with the puritanism which put Cowper under a cloud. While censorious of Calvinism he seeks to understand it and deal kindly with its less lurid aspects, but he is unable to get away from the fact that Calvinism made a ruin of Cowper, lamenting that the harried poet never came under the benign influence of John Wesley's beneficent Arminianism,—or, even better, the Arminianism of Wesley's friend and nominated successor, John Fletcher, whom Voltaire singled out as the most noble-minded saint of his age. He disagrees in some respects with Lord David Cecil and that very thorough and scholarly critic Hugh I'A. Fausset, for he has a more intimate knowledge of the religious undercurrents which swept Cowper, and he does not believe that the influence of John Newton was as baleful as they have suggested. In this he is probably right, for the damage seems to have been done by others before Cowper came under the sway of Newton's comparatively innocuous Calvinism; but he is not right when he says, "the idea is still held by ignorant people that Wesley worked upon the fears of the feeble-minded and 'preached against a lurid background of eternal conflagration'" for such statements and violent contradictions need copiously qualifying; and though it is true that few single men have done more than John Wesley "to spread abroad the love that casts out fear," the eternal conflagration was never denied by him, and became part of the stock-in-trade theology of his followers—all the more terrible in that they rejected the Catholic conception of purification through purgatory, and so landed three-quarters of the world in eternal Hell. What John Wesley and his followers did so effectively was to put into chains the even more hideous gospel of "Predestination"—the central dragon in the cupboard of Calvinism—though they were unable to entirely destroy it, even in their own church.

The book is one to highly recommend. It is massive, humane, and intensely interesting; and the vivid pictures given of Cowper's pre-industrial England have probably never been surpassed.

HERBERT PALMER.

THE LIFE OF CHARLES GORE. By G. L. Prestige, D.D. William Heinemann, Ltd. 18s.

An extension of the title of this biography on the fly-leaf describes Gore as A Great Englishman. Duly impressed with that important information we read on the second page: "The boy derived his ancestry on either side directly from an Irish peerage." English or Irish, who cares? Charles Gore was without question one of the greatest men of his time measured by the usual standards of comparison. Of whom else can one say that at 36 years of age there was to his credit the founding of Pusey House, the inauguration of a new Religious Order in the English Church, the creation of the Christian Social Union, and the editorship of the now historic volume "Lux Mundi" which literally shook the ecclesiastical world? This young man was only getting into his stride with these achievements behind him and withal remained throughout life the most modest of individuals. For instance, Gore was returning to his lodgings in Oxford one evening in 1914 after conducting a mission. He was accosted by Father Maturin who said to him: "This night has been an answer to my prayer. I have always longed to see the University Church filled with undergraduates, being taught real religion by a master of it." Gore's only answer was to collapse almost to the ground. With the bestowal of a Canonry at Westminster crowds flocked to the Abbey not merely to hear him preach but to profit by his teaching. Perhaps the most difficult, yet nevertheless one of the most agreeable jobs he ever undertook was the setting up of the Diocese of Birmingham of which he became first bishop, the new see having been cut off from his own Diocese of Worcester. Without compromising in the smallest measure any of his High Church principles in this stronghold of Non-conformity, Gore speedily made friends with Sir Oliver Lodge, Dr. Dale, Joseph Chamberlain, and Mr. Cadbury with whom he gladly co-operated in all their social, civic, and moral enterprises. Indeed we learn from this volume that Gore found himself in direct opposition to Cadbury's policy about Turf reports in his papers. "What seems to me to be indefensible," said the Bishop, "is that some proprietors should own a newspaper *which makes a high moral claim for not publishing betting news* (as the *Daily News* has done) and then acquire two others which incite to betting."

Gore was once more translated: this time to the Diocese of Oxford. Even his enthusiastic biographer cannot show that his episcopate here was a success or that he was ever happy in it. At heart the Bishop was a plain, unvarnished Socialist, the friend of Ben Tillett, Tom Mann and folk of that sort, whose views of society as at present constituted were not those of the Oxfordshire aristocracy. Not unnaturally therefore they felt that their Bishop was letting himself and them down. They refused furthermore to lend him financial support in his scheme for sub-dividing the Diocese. It was not on all fours, they supposed, to advocate the creation of two more sees in England while supporting a Bill for the disestablishment of all those in Wales. Even Dr. Prestige says a caustic thing about Gore's conviction of the necessity of disestablishment in England. We must quote it from p. 430: "That disestablishment would probably be accompanied by an act of disendowment, confiscating so large a proportion of ancient Church revenues as to leave the parishes without a single priest over vast areas

of rural England, was a fact which Gore not so much ignored as dismissed. Disestablishment was the right policy, let the skies fall, and overwhelm the Church. Man's part was simply to claim the Church's rights. It was for God to rescue the Church from the débris." With his resignation of the Bishopric came what our author calls, not inaptly as a chapter heading, *The Prisoner's Release*. It gave him some leisure for serious writing, the indulgence of his appetite for reading—not merely voracious but apparently omnivorous, and a larger share in the counsels of the Primate. This paradoxical man, at once "a great Englishman" and on both sides of the house an Irishman; a convinced Socialist and a great snob, who referred to a gift of partridges as a present from some soap-boiler, was also at the same time recognised leader of the Anglo-Catholics and the uncompromising Protestant at the Malines Conversations.

The biography under notice has been so ably presented that one hardly dares a word of criticism. On page 17 the second paragraph begins with a meaningless sentence: it should be phrased in correct English. We must emphatically register our impression that sufficient attention has not been drawn to Gore's magnificent theological output. Very proper stress has been laid on the epoch-marking publication of "*Lux Mundi*" and his contribution to it, but we know that one swallow does not make a summer. Almost casual references to nearly a score of valuable works from Gore's enormous learning is not to do him justice. Less preoccupation with tedious curates and their vagaries: more detailed analysis of the splendid apologetic which reveals Gore standing head and shoulders above his confreres on the Bench would have made this a really first rate piece of work. To me it is simply astounding that the Trilogy classified as *The Reconstruction of Belief* with a subsidiary volume, *Can We Then Believe?* are summed up on a couple of pages. Of the two great problems which are exercising theologians to-day and with which Gore honestly grapples there is hardly a word—the Apocalyptic teaching of Jesus and the relation of Christianity to the Mystery Religions. One sees a vague reference on page 464 to "violent distortions of the evidence of the Gospels." We discover no allusion whatever to the Bishop's manifest embarrassment with Sir James Frazer and M. Loisy. "His conception of historical evidence," we are told, "was old-fashioned." I totally disagree.

This book is packed full of good stories. Certainly Gore has been revealed to us as a great human being with a wonderful love for children and weak things. His appreciation of Art in all its branches—pictures, architecture, music was exquisitely keen. One story: After the orchestra had played a Brandenburg concerto at the Queen's Hall he was heard commenting in the corridor: "If that is true, everything must be all right." Compare it with the following from Wm. de Morgan's *Joseph Vance*: "How often have I said to myself after some perfectly convincing phrase of Beethoven, 'Of course, if *that* is so, there can be no occasion to worry.'"

"Transcendent Glory" were his last words on his death bed.

SAMUEL B. CROOKS.

MORE LETTERS FROM MARTHA WILMOT.

IMPRESSIONS OF VIENNA, 1819-29. Macmillan. 21s. net.

These letters were written by Martha Bradford (née Wilmot) during the ten years that her husband was chaplain to the British Embassy at Vienna.

Martha, who must already have charmed her relatives by her descriptions of her life in Russia before her marriage, now writes home to England lively and amusing letters describing life in Vienna after the Napoleonic wars.

The book opens with an account of the journey to Vienna, and we hear of Martha's Parisian pelisse, "that are jem, so justly admired at our watering places of fashion" in England. But a mere customs officer at Calais knew the fashions better, and "holding up the pelisse exclaimed in a burst of laughter 'Parbleu c'est Henri Quatre.'"

But Martha and her husband laughed too, and one can feel Martha immediately adjusting herself to her new surroundings.

On arrival at Vienna we are given a cheerful account of the horrors of looking for lodgings, and of the still greater horrors of cleaning the lodgings when found. But here again there are compensations. We hear of the "House Master" attached to every house, "whose duty it is to see that wood is not kept in large quantities *out* of your cellar, that doors are locked at 10 o'clock, after which hour one *pays* to be let in, that no irregular doings go forward" etc. What a comfort such an institution would be to many householders of the present day.

Soon the family settle down, and then Martha is in her element. She describes the splendours of the Viennese Court, and the marvellous jewelled dresses worn at the Spanish Ambassador's ball, where, she tells us, "the Men's dresses almost exceeded the Women's in Splendour, no Englishman could or would support it, to his Honour be it said."

During the first part of Martha's life in Vienna the English Ambassador was Lord Stewart, afterwards Marquess of Londonderry. The good impression he and his wife at first made on Mrs. Bradford soon faded away; we are not told why. Lady Stewart is described as "an ungrateful selfish animal," and Martha becomes very sarcastic when she writes about the really astonishing christening of the Stewart son and heir.

Then we are told of the "vanity and selfishness" of "our mock Royals," and of a ball given by them for an Austrian Archduchess, at which the music was suddenly stopped by the Ambassador because his wife had a headache. "I think 'tis time for me to retire" said the Archduchess, "and without further apology" (from the Ambassador) "she was obliged to quit the house."

Naturally enough we hear much of the charms of Mrs. Bradford's three children, and we hear also of the troublesome servants who stole everything in the house as soon as they heard the Bradfords were going to Italy. "Whilst I combed my hair with the large comb, my little Italian nymph snapped up my tail comb." Then the maids came to Mrs. Bradford in floods of tears asking her to forgive any wrong they had done her, but as soon as forgiveness was granted, "Annette stole some shoes, and Nanny some pots for meat before their eyes could have dried."

With really remarkable courage Mr. and Mrs. Bradford set out in 1821 for a tour in Italy, accompanied by a nurse and by three small children, one at least

very delicate. But bad roads, bad food, and even a bad illness, made little impression on Mrs. Bradford, who enjoyed it all and gives lively and appreciative glimpses of the country through which they passed. She admired wholeheartedly the scenery, the correct pictures, and the people, whilst she forgave the discomforts incidental to such a journey. The following words are typical of Martha as a traveller: "We shut our eyes, and got into beds more odious than words can tell, but fatigue soon brought sleep to console us, and we had no time to lose, for next day we were in the carriage by six o'clock."

After a stay in Rome of some months the family returned by easy stages to Vienna. Here Martha Bradford resumed her busy and happy life, educating her children most conscientiously, and equally conscientiously attending all the gaieties at the Court and Embassy, until her husband was recalled to England in 1829.

The book is illustrated with clever drawings of celebrities of the day by Rev. William Bradford himself.

J. M. H.

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SYMBOLS OF REVELATION. By Frederick Carter. (Adam Fitzadam). 3s. 6d.

To read this book is to have the imagination, almost unaccountably, stirred. Mr. Carter's theme is the Revelation of St. John, that "strange complex of glowing images set in what is, nowadays, an admittedly confusing order." That the book of St. John had a rational basis in some mode of thought explicable to its time, I had already taken for granted. Things revealed "in the spirit" necessarily take their bodies in known shapes. But to our time, because our thought has moved from the old myth modes, the giant figures that passed before St. John have become two-dimensional. They satisfy feeling in some queer way—perhaps, as Mr. Carter says, because "psychologically there exists a curious fullness of contentment through sight"; and they stir, also, those unknowable depths of the subconscious where fine poetry does the most of its work. But the great book, as a whole, leaves the intellect hungry and crying out for the knowledge that will enable a synthesis to be made. Intellect, after all, must comprehend, too! It is, perhaps, a sign of the time that Mr. Carter brings it what will—must—satisfy its hunger!

He makes plain, with no little learning, that the puzzling sequences of imagery which are the many strata of St. John's great drama were ordered definitely by one thoroughly learned in astrological symbolism. Once that is realized, and it needs no further proof that this book, the Apocalypse takes on a spiritual meaning that was before beyond the imagination. In Mr. Carter's hands, it becomes greater than I had ever thought it to be; for I see, now, that caught into it—its very mould, in fact—are the old myth-shapes wherein growing man imaged himself in deity. The key to the Apocalypse is in the antique universe where the constellations—the "houses" of the Astrologers—have a nearly definite meaning to the intellect which exists to this day. That John poured a new meaning into them—if he did—does not lessen what the original symbol has carried to us. What he does seem to have done was to have caught up the speculative element inherent in the older system into one glorious vision of the

destiny of the human soul. The Apocalypse, Mr. Carter says, "deals with ultimate things." "Last and most difficult of all the books in the Scriptural canon, for this reason was it included at the every end." It is due to him to say again that he has thrust aside the greater of the difficulties. Intellect, now, may sit before the gigantic stage where John unrolled the future. And that is, perhaps—as I have said before—a sign of the time.

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THE PURSUIT OF MUSIC. By Walford Davies. Nelson. 7s. 6d.

A BACKGROUND FOR DOMENICO SCARLATTI. By Sacheverell Sitwell. Faber and Faber. 5s.

Sir Walford Davies is one of the discoveries of the B.B.C. Before the Aerial Age he was, of course, greatly respected as an eminent organist and a composer of Church music. Now, however, his microphone manner has made him musician-in-ordinary to every household where the wireless set has supplanted the Upright Grand, and his dicta on such things as school songs, sea shanties and symphonies make paragraphs in the Press beside the best sayings (in their respective spheres) of an Agate, an Inge, or an Einstein! This book, then, is Sir Walford's Testament of Music, and it is written and addressed specially to young people who may wish to know what Music is all about. In these pages young and old alike will find much valuable information and suggestions. A more leisurely journey than pursuing music with Walford Davies is to peep with Mr. Sitwell at the rich tapestries before which the courtly Scarlatti passed. The backgrounds are brilliant, indeed—Italy, Spain and Portugal in the eighteenth century—and who is a better guide to such times and thrones than Mr. Sitwell? Bach, Handel and Scarlatti were born in 1685—O Annus Mirabilis!—and in writing this charming book Mr. Sitwell has honoured Domenico's two hundred and fiftieth anniversary, an event which was somewhat forgotten last year in the tributes paid to the mighty chords and choruses of John Sebastian and George Frederick.

ARTHUR DUFF.

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THE SINGING MEN AT CASHEL. By Austin Clarke. Allen & Unwin. 8s. 6d. net.

During the Irish nineties our mythology was so ransacked by poetic story-tellers that heroic figures, from saga and song, dwindled through a thinning prose, until they became faery once again. Their return to the dwarfing imagination of the countryside released common people for active service and common adventures in fields of Irish realism. And now even those fields are growing thin with over bearing. The exploration of strange new worlds is not generally the adventure of modern Irish writers. The mythological world afforded, undoubtedly, a twilight adventure in exploitation; and during more recent years the Irish mediaeval world, in its own twilight glimpses, has become more than an episode. Mr. Austin Clarke is the only imaginative writer of importance to explore that riotous,

yet grotesquely severe world. Indeed his bright adventures, revealing a manner of life, so common to the spiritual rigour and phantasy of our day, may appear satirical on curious inhibitions in this unchanging Ireland, this clerical Tammany Hall. His remarkably rich play, *The Son of Learning* brought us into contact, in humorous extravagance of speech and belief, with an age that reflects a modern exuberance; while later in *The Bright Temptation*,—his first novel—Mr. Austin Clarke recreated the same world again in simple and barbaric splendour; he expressed its abstract piety and played satirically with the dangers of holy innocence.

While Mr. Austin Clarke has purposely outgrown that age of innocence, his present novel of marriage nights—*The Singing Men at Cashel* belongs to the world of his earlier work; but that world, in the meanwhile, has matured from human lore into scholastic richness and both are now employed elaborately yet with surprising dexterity. The story of Gormlai, that queenly poetess and her three matrimonial adventures—a well-known bardic theme—is the main-stay of *The Singing Men at Cashel*; and in the telling of this tale, Mr. Clarke produces an architecture of simple strength to greater advantage than the method used in his earlier prose work. The drive of this intense theme carries his second novel into a finer sense of form, of story-telling; and yet it affords liberal scope for pleasant diversion and suitable digression. *The Singing Men at Cashel* opens pastorally with a young poet Anier escaping from poetic study, only to learn from two buxom girls of Gormlai's wedding to Cormac of Cashel. Through innocent assistance from a lascivious old man the poet finds himself in the roaring presence of the wedding feast, where Gormlai sits clearly as in a little space of quiet. "She seemed alone, unreachd by the turmoil as if indeed the fair sacrament of that morning guarded her spirit with its grace." From the magnificent benediction scene we follow the bride and her helpers to a virginal bedding. Quick ear and lively eye await the coming of the bridegroom until exhausted with unconsummated expectation, Gormlai drifts into deep slumber, sinking "to that last unknown depth of the human mind to which even the whispers of our Guardian Angel cannot find their way." Out of that heaviness and while her husband enjoys some spiritual exercise the morning brings a well-timed meeting with Nial, her calf-lover. Mr. Clarke, showing modern skill in the use of tale-tricks, takes us with Cormac and Gormlai into Cashel; and there the weird maze of mediaeval art is made richly apparent. Cormac in all the manners well becoming a great ecclesiastic, goes about heavenly business while Gormlai, his maiden bride, strays, a solitary female—through that city of celibacy. Among religious craftiness her natural innocence awakes in a twilight of consciousness; and with that awakening comes the realization of her husband's fearful self-denial of the flesh, until her first separation is accepted as a matter of honour. Was there ever a greater contrast between two husbands of the same woman as between Cormac of Cashel—that gentle man of severe learning—and King Carrol of Leinster who once "at the High Cross of Kells, between his arms naked but for their bracelets, had crushed a dozen Danish Ironsides one by one as they sprang towards the plinth and dashed their brains out against the minute apostles"? These distinctions of type are conveyed by the novelist with masterly treatment. Carrol is second husband to Gormlai. That amorous and ambitious man excites a quarrel with Cormac, his own foster-brother; and the way in which Carrol's

intentions dawn on Gormlai gives us one of the most dramatic episodes in the novel. In the appalled realisation of her man Gormlai again meets Nial, that former calf-lover who now becomes something more. Cormac of Cashel is killed in the accidents of this fratricidal war; and Gormlai who spiritually suffers grave injuries and mental torments flees from Carrol. After divorce Gormlai is spiritually and physically cooled by Nial; for he by now has become her third, yet one and only, husband.

The real qualities of *The Singing Men at Cashel* cannot be adequately conveyed in a rough sketch of the main story. There exists behind this story an amazing background which Mr. Austin Clarke has lavishly depicted. Episodes of queer happenings, curious knowledge and strange human beings are given in those weird and magnificent settings of the Middle Ages. One or two of these episodes recalls *The Storyteller's Holiday*; yet what George Moore attempted in water colours, Mr. Austin Clarke has accomplished in oil painting with greater vigour and directness. Apart from that slight reminder, there is nothing in modern Irish literature to compare with this novel. Its gentle humour poked—with much nudging and winking—at profundity, its unassuming weight of hagiology plied with lightness and the beauty of its dovetailed style, give this work rare distinction; for indeed *The Singing Men at Cashel* is a remarkable book.

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THE GREEN LION. By Francis Hackett. Ivor Nicholson & Watson, 7s. 6d. 424 pp.

The evocation of a childhood is, I think, one of the sternest tests of quality a writer can give himself. Mr. Hackett succeeds so well that one is tempted, in reviewing this book, to enlarge on the delicacy of his technique. And that would be, really, unfair; for the manner is so made to the man that it is only very occasionally that one becomes aware of it. There is a brooding maturity in this novel which manages, for one reader at least, to seem the fulfilment of a very troublesome phase of growth. And, in spite of its maturity—perhaps because of it—Mr. Hackett succeeds in restating youth in its own terms: not youth's definiteness only, the mere ABC of its experience, but those half-realised things which are outside its immediate alphabet and which, possibly for that very reason, play the great part in composing the attitude of the grown man. In that No-man's-land, Mr. Hackett is very sure-footed. To move with him is a spiritual excitement. Moods I had forgotten; psychical disturbances; terrors; and those grand moments when the Psyche balances the whole being like a bird are all created so vividly for me that I am inclined to deliberate on aspects which may, after all, be but mirrors of my own particular experience. I believe, however, that this book is important for all Irishmen. There is a phase of Irish life unrolled in it whose full value, perhaps, will be realised only in the far future. Parnell is more than a political landmark in Mr. Hackett's story. To the boy, in whose life he makes a brief early appearance, he becomes a measure that will be used in after life to determine the hollowness of Church and State; a symbol of the human spirit in its evolution towards that perfect state where it may walk

naked. There is a close-up from many angles of the famous Kilkenny election where Church and State made a hare of decency. What emerges is not so much Parnell as his significance to the nation. The slants taken on country-town life (which is, incidentally, the real life of a country) at this significant time would be terrifying did we not realise that this boy, at least, was to come through; and that others, in time, were sure to follow.

The story ranges from a Catholic boyhood in a farmhouse and in Kilkenny city to an arid Boarding School run by Jesuits. Curiously, but quite rightly, it is in the latter place that the boy starts to thrust aside the intolerably ascetic ethic that is stunting him. Not by taking thought but by yielding to a deeper instinct. It is all very natural. Life itself seems to be his shaper. Incidents, people, missionary rhetoric, priests' parables, fears, misunderstandings, natural sex-urge, love, daydreams, all of life's paraphernalia, make the mould. The story is so real that one suspects autobiography. If I have a grouse coming, it is that the book is too short. Many characters are not given sufficient rein. A few jags and straight lines of journalism would make this book the rage. The writing is so good that it is apt to be suggestive rather than pictorial when there is an immediate incident to be recorded; instead of sudden reaction to situation, there is emotion recollected in tranquillity and—may I say it—a corresponding tendency to monotony of effect. Those, however, are the defects of its quality. The book is important and ripe. And it demands a sequel.

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NEW FICTION

- FORGIVE ADAM. By Michael Foster. (Constable, 7s. 6d.).
 HELL'S BELLS. By Marmaduke Dixey. (Faber and Faber, 7s. 6d.).
 THE WORLD IS FOR THE YOUNG. By Blanche Girouard. (Davies, 7s. 6d.).
 SHE LOVED AN OLD MAN. By Elisabeth Schucht. (Cape, 5s.).
 COMMERCIAL HOTEL. By Ruth Anderson. (Davies, 7s. 6d.).
 SOMEWHERE TO THE SEA. By Kenneth Sarr. (Nelson, 7s. 6d.).
 WILDERNESS BLOSSOMS. By Russell Green. (Nelson, 7s. 6d.).
 THE RETREAT. By Forrest Reid. (Faber and Faber, 7s. 6d.).

Forgive Adam is placed at the head of my list, not because it is in my opinion the best novel sent for review, but because it belongs to the new American cinema school of fiction and is therefore of particular significance to those to whom the novel as a form of art is of interest. For here is an excellent sample of a rapidly moving "strong" story which by its paucity of descriptions, and by its apparent interpretation of the mental processes of the average decent "guy" makes an immediate appeal. The most tired brain can understand what the author is getting at, and who he is getting at, and the more discriminating reader cannot fail to admire the book's extraordinary clarity and slickness, using the last word in no derogatory sense.

It can indeed be admitted that this class of *The Postman Always Rings Twice* story has performed a useful service in setting an example to the author

who loves to linger over a description of the sun going down on a cabbage patch or the delicate or otherwise fancies of an individual in love, and so forth, of the virtues of elimination. Economy, first last and all the time, is no bad rule, and it is here that this novel, like others of its genre, scores. The weakness, and it is a considerable one, is in the underlying values which are always sentimental, and therefore always false. *Forgive Adam* is more obviously sentimental than is customary. A husband, separated from his wife, whom he never for a moment forgets to hanker after; a pathetic little boy who waits up for Daddy coming back from his newspaper office in the hope that he may play with him; dialogue with just the right touch of salty bitterness—

"Anna is a swell girl, Anton. I—"

"All our wives are swell girls."

"All right. But—"

"And we're swell guys." Anton said. "That makes it just dandy for everyone doesn't it."

The insistence on the number of shots of whiskey consumed; and a final suicide—in this case because a young girl whose trial for theft has been a "frame up," and she cannot face the sentence of three months' imprisonment—are ingredients of some blatancy. Yet there are plenty of good things in the book: sometimes the cynicism is effective as: "In those days the word 'gentleman' had a meaning. Now it is used without restraint on the doors of public lavatories and in the Senate."

Nevertheless the difficulty of combining so much deftness with anything approaching a true foundation remains. Mr. Foster's book is like those houses built on sand which the Scripture warns us cannot endure.

Now and then a reviewer gets a book which is so very much to his or her personal liking that one wonders whether it can be quite as good as all that. *Hell's Bells* is an extremely witty satire on modern civilisation which can also be taken as a forthright expression of old-fashioned, and universal, standards. The inquiring elderly solicitor, Pilgrim, launched by a chapter of amusing accidents into Hell, finds it presided over by one, Mr. Nicholas, a very modern devil ("Satan in glasses, Satan, bleak, orderly, ordinary, rather underbred, a little bloodless, very kind.") and fitted with every modern convenience only much more so. The one ideal is comfort; everyone has money and everyone is bored. Mr. Dixey carries his satire along with a fine sophistication which I cannot admire too much. And then we come to Pilgrim's journey out of hell ("You walk," said Macandrew, with crisp and cruel emphasis. "All the way. On your own flat feet.") by way of Arty Crafty and Home Town—from where one can see the heavenly towers at certain moments. The whole is a magnificent and needed affirmation.

Lady Blanche Girouard has given us a collection of stories of Irish life marked by a rare and exquisite tenderness. Her subjects are not new so far as the Irish scene is concerned. There is the familiar surrender of the mountainy farm by an old man at the behest of his wife and daughter who wish for the more social life of the village; there is the story of a match that for one cause or another delays its making, and of another match with an unexpected ending; there are stories of "characters," a woman with her wits most gaily astray, and an old cow doctor; and less successful, because more superficial, sketches of "the

troubles." But nothing she writes, and she writes well, is not marked by the true understanding and warmth of a sensitive vision.

Elisabeth Schucht's book, translated from the German, is also a notable little work. In the form of letters to an intimate woman friend she tells us of the disillusionment of a young woman tied to a paralysed husband who falls in love with a Dutch diplomat, over thirty years her senior. The writer of the letters is ardent, generous and whole-hearted; the man she loves is kind, attentive, even tender, giving all except the capacity to relinquish himself to the ardours of a love affair. And so in the end he retreats, without even a farewell, from her life. The weakness of the tale, in its translation at least, is a tendency towards lusciousness, giving the effect of feminine tea-time conversation in an overfurnished over-heated room. But it remains a moving presentation of a situation more common in real life than in fiction.

The next two novels on my list are good examples of straightforward unpretentious narrative. Miss Anderson, we are told, really keeps an hotel similar to the one of which she writes. And if one enjoys—I do—being let in behind the scenes of some particular calling, then this book should be interesting. The writer is perhaps a little over conscious of the effect of her youth and attractiveness on her commercial gentlemen; also that she is not quite as they are, having been an Oxford graduate and tasted beer in a Cotswold pub! But one forgives her at the end when she admits, truly or not, that she has like lesser beings fallen for a commercial. And a married commercial, too!

Mr. Saar takes us back to Black and Tan Dublin as it affected a young solicitor of those days. His hero, Neil, pleads in the Sinn Fein courts, helps his fellow rebels, goes to prison, and falls in love. But the best part of the book is not the somewhat pale and unconvincing story, but the easy digressions including an excellent description of Westland Row, and some candid opinions of Dublin life.

Having read Mr. Russell Green's book, or at least made the attempt, I can only regretfully conclude that here is a book which is not for me. We are admitted into the life of the Eyre family, and given also a view, many views, of the Victorian calvalcade as it unrolls around the infancy and childhood of Roland Eyre. But it is all so very descriptive, so coy in its approaches—and the book is nearly all laboured approaches—so stuffed with mannerisms and facetiousness, that the only fair thing for the present reviewer to do is to point out that Mr. Green has been highly praised, that Mr. Louis Golding, for example, has said of a previous work that "Beauty glows from page to page."

Mr. Forrest Reid needs no praise at this time of the day. He is to my mind one of the very few writers whose resurrection of the magic of childhood's days is really convincing. His new book is marked by that delicate quality of tracery which has justly brought him renown. He stands, or the little boy, Tom, stands, on the threshold of two worlds, the everyday one of going to school and trying to understand geometrical propositions, of holidays and of playing with the cat, and the other world just beyond in which the black cat takes on strange qualities, and in which sleep walking may be the outward garment of a very strange adventure. Personally I am better able to appreciate the truth of Tom, and of his contrasting matter-of-fact friend, Pascoe, in the day to day adventure, but undeniably here is a book of fine and haunting quality.

NORAH HOULT.

"MIRAGES." By R. B. Cunninghame Graham. (Heinemann, 7s. 6d.).

There are writers who stand out not so much by what they write, or how they write, but because their every page bears the indisputable hall mark of a personality. Mr. Cunninghame Graham belonged to this select band, and so we are willing to follow where he leads without asking where.

It is usually, as in this new book of stories and sketches, into a still untamed world of good horsemen, adventurers, and cheerful scoundrels. Spain, Mexico, Morocco, and Brazil have their own empire builders; men whose names do not stand out in the annals of the great, even of the great bull fighters, but men whose hearts have beaten to a high measure. Their stories are told here with grace, and the fleeting nature of the exploits, and of all life, accented by old proverbs of an oriental and fatalistic flavour. There is indeed a nostalgic scent about the whole for the author writes of days before "Progress, that car of Juggernaut that sweeps away old-world abuses, to place more modern evils in their stead," had done much towards the standardisation even of adventure.

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TWENTY YEARS A-GROWING. By Maurice O'Sullivan. London: Chatto & Windus, 1933.

The appearance in 1929 of an excellent autobiography by¹ Tomás Ó Criomhain, an old man of the Blasket Island, caused a sensation in the little world of Irish readers and brought him immediate recognition. It was translated into English by Robin Flower in 1935.

In appraising the two later publications it is helpful to glance back at the older man's work which has been considerably overshadowed by them owing to the unrestrained praise that the English version *Twenty Years A-growing* received from English reviewers.

The history of Tomás Ó Criomhain's authorship is a romantic story in itself. The author was born in the Great Blasket Island in 1856. In his long life he never ventured further afield than a few miles east to Dunquin or to Ballyferriter, or south-east to Valentia and Cahirciveen. His chequered school-days were passed during the bad times when the National Board of Education, under the auspices of the British Government, was carrying out its plan to make happy British children out of Irish girls and boys. In pursuance of this object only the English language was permitted as a medium of instruction and the mother tongue, Irish, was not taught in the island school. In 1905 when a Gaelic League teacher came to the island Tomás at the age of 49 learned to read his native language and he taught himself to write by imitating the printed letters of the books he was reading.

To Brian Ó Ceallaigh is due the credit of discovering the man of letters.

¹ ḡḡ ḡḡḡḡḡḡ : ḡḡḡ ḡ ḡḡḡḡḡ ḡḡḡ ḡḡ ḡḡḡḡḡḡḡḡ ḡḡḡ ḡ ḡḡḡḡḡḡḡ. ḡḡ ḡḡ ḡḡḡḡḡḡ ḡḡ ḡḡḡḡḡḡ ḡḡ. ḡ ḡḡḡḡḡḡḡ ḡḡḡ, ḡḡḡḡḡ ḡḡ ḡḡḡḡ ḡḡ ḡḡḡḡḡḡḡ, 1929.

In 1917 he spent over a year on the Great Blasket where Tomás was his teacher and constant companion. The islandman's fine talk showed that he had a flair for literature and a love for verse and story, and he had copied into a book tales and poetry from oral tradition. But when Mr. Ó Ceallaigh asked him to write a piece of prose about himself or about the people and their life he laughed and said, "O, everyone knows what is going on in the island." The modern art of storywriting was unknown to him and he could not visualise readers' astride his little world. But when Mr. Ó Ceallaigh translated for him parts of Loti's *Pêcheur d'Islande* and some of the autobiography of Maxim Gorki to help him to appreciate what readers liked he realised that a story could be made out of his own simple life. He preferred Gorki to the French writer because Gorki described the hard life of the poor of Russia and he learned from him that a fisherman could write a book as well as a learned man.

Tomás is a fisherman, a farmer of one cow and a stone mason. He is a fine craftsman in words and his two books of which *An t-Oiteánac* is the well-told story of his simple island life have made for him a permanent place in modern Gaelic literature. He has given pleasure to his countrymen, and this book, expressive of simple Irish life, is written without self-consciousness and with that ease and sense of common values that we look for in good literature. He gives a clear picture of the remote world of his three score and ten years with fine command of idiom, and a frankness that is delightful. He has not had recourse to the usual descriptive passages or purple patches that betray the conscious effort to discover his world to the reader, which is in the tradition of English, or of Anglo-Irish, and is not Gaelic. By his story-teller's art he takes us along with him almost unawares to sit by his fireside or to walk with him on the hill; his people are around us; we soon know them, their manners, their characters, their idiosyncrasies; we hear their quick smooth talk, acute, detached, humorous, full of the wisdom that comes out of old times, old memories and old culture. There is no emphasis or underlining; there is the brave heart that has withstood sorrow and hardship but there are no regrets, no note of sadness or self pity. The old man scans with his clear eyes the far horizons that bound the ocean about his island home and finds within these limits his life's philosophy.

Tomás Dhonail's sowing soon brought the first sign of harvest. Three years after *An t-Oiteánac* had delighted the Irish-speaking world a young man of the Blaskets, Muiris O'Súileabháin, published an autobiographical account of his first twenty years of life. Taking no chances with Fortune he cast a double throw, and his book saw the light simultaneously in English and Irish. With the Irish story came a fine English book from a publishing house in London resembling his own story in substance, bearing an introduction and recommendation from a well known English novelist and critic.

This English version of Muiris's book achieved remarkable success abroad and the lustre of its English fame, fairy-godmotherlike, befriended the Cinderella at home where here, too, it became the best seller of the day and quickly ran into the second edition. Muiris's book is written so closely on the lines as *An t-Oiteánac* with the obvious difference that one would expect to find in an auto-

biography of the first twenty years of life and of a life lived fully beyond the average span. It has the obvious weaknesses too; the narrative is made up of a series of chapters dealing with wakes, weddings, matchmaking, Ventry races, a day's hunting; whatever seemed best to reveal this strange island to the great world outside. The last chapters are the most vivid and natural. Muiris is in the City. The narrative displays the obvious contrast between the simple island boy and the sophisticated "wonders" of Dublin, the cinema, the city traffic and so on. When we meet Muiris in Dublin he has become something like the stock native Irishman of nineteenth-century Ascendancy fiction, anxious to please his friends with his joy and naive wonder at everything. Was he really so simple, he that had come from the next-parish-to-America, to whom accounts of great cities written home in letters to the Blaskets or described by returned emigrants must have been familiar? Or was he like many a character in Anglo-Irish literature, trying to please his grand friends in the big house? When a post in the Civic Guards was offered to him he had hesitated for long seeming to prefer to go to the homelier Springfield, Mass., than to venture eastward into that unknown land.

Muiris's story is a succession of incidents. He idealises the life on the island; the weather is always fair, every day is a "lá breáḡ gréine" and the rosy side of the picture is the only one we are allowed to see. The reader never gets a hint of a train of thought in the author's mind that might not be pleasing and even when he was agitated about the choice of his career—America or Dublin—his whole mental process is summed up in the statement that he was there lying on the hill-side in the sun "as maectnam ar an saogal." That is something Muiris keeps to himself; lying deep as it was in his self-conscious nature his mentor could not reach it. He has none of the frankness of Tomás. He is genteely discreet when he writes of the bad times of 1923 when so many of the island folk, including his sisters, had to emigrate to America to earn something for their poverty-stricken people at home.

Fíce Bliain as Fás is written in the old convention of the Anglo-Irish school, of Carleton and Banim, of showing the Irish "peasant" and his queer ways to the English-speaking world outside. ". . . and though he is pleased that his book should be translated," writes E. M. Forster in the introductory note, "his main care is for the Irish original, because it will be read in the Blasket. They will appreciate it there more than we can, for whom the wit and poetry must be veiled. On the other hand we are the superiors in astonishment. They cannot possibly be as much surprised as we are, for here is the egg of a sea-bird—lovely, perfect and laid this very morning." And on the wrapper the book bears its recommendation, "It is the first rendering into English of a genuine account of the Irish peasants, written by one of themselves . . ." and as E. M. Forster in saying "This book is unique" appears to be unaware of *An t-Oileánac* (1929) and many books by other Irish writers such as the greatest of all, *Pádraic Ó Conaire*.

Looking without prejudice at the two books, *Fíce Bliain as Fás* (Talbot Press, Dublin) and *Twenty Years A-growing* (Chatto and Windus, London) and comparing them, the truth appears, in spite of protests, that the translation's the thing. For the English version reaches the great reading public of England and America, and it bears the necessary hall-mark, the prestige of an English publishing house.

Evidence of mentorship appears in the selection of incidents, the use of proverbs or snatches of Gaelic poetry which come into his narrative without much relevance but for effect like the too frequent descriptions of scenery. These topographical pieces are the "purple patches" that are more characteristic of English prose style than of Gaelic writing. For all the descriptive passages that picture rather vaguely the seascape, and the lists of birds, the seal-hunt, and the story of this odd character and that unusual incident or adventure, what do we know of the people Muiris lived among, as we know Tomás Ó Críomáin's neighbours although they are the same people. Literature that is built up on a standard like this rings false. It gains its effect by creating surprise, as E. M. Forster admits, in the mind of the reader who belongs to an alien culture, but the Irish reader feels no such wonder and is interested only in the story for its intrinsic value.

The book-of-the-month may bring royalties (and they are not to be scorned) but to our struggling Gaelic literature much harm is done by concurrent translation. An English version published simultaneously with the original in our present state of letters dwarfs the original and puts it in a secondary place at once; it raises a false standard as it did in Anglo-Irish novels, travel books, etc., where the writers were chiefly thinking of foreign readers unaccustomed to our way of life and it will inevitably spoil what might be good. If the Gaelic author looks out through the eyes of a mentor whose view-point is essentially different, and if he sees in his work the reflection of a quasi-Kiltartan or "Irish-English" translation before him the wells of his inspiration are dried at the source. The sincerity of the artist is wanting and the result is weak. It is the buoyancy of the sea-bird's egg floating on the surface of the water, it is the sign of decay even if the egg were freshly gathered but this morning.

ERLÍN NÍC SHÁINNE.

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BONES OF CONTENTION. By Frank O'Connor. (Macmillan, 7s. 6d.).

To say that in "Guests of the Nation," Mr. Frank O'Connor set himself a very high standard is one way of saying that "Bones of Contention" is somewhat disappointing. It is! But, whereas "Guests of the Nation" was the finished technical expression of a certain level of experience—experience easier to express because it naturally took form in lavish incident and dramatic situation; "Bones of Contention" has all the excitement of new experiment. Mr. O'Connor is one of the few Irish writers who would take a chance with such a story as "Orpheus and His Lute," a rich extravaganza of the Lever kind that one still finds floating like a folktale in dim public houses in country towns or in back parishes where poteen is still more than a name. What it lacks on paper is, I fancy, that "willing suspension of disbelief" which one yields so readily when there's a glass at the elbow. As an experiment, however, it was certainly worth trying. Another story, "Lofty," of somewhat similar seed is much more unreal. In this, a thread of caricature drags what might have well been a very good tragi-comedy into a lopsided farce. "Lofty," somehow, "What's Wrong with the Country" and "A Romantic" seem to be stories with hollow centres. There

is rich minor characterization and brilliant patches in each of them that are not incidental but do, really, follow the pattern of the stories: and still in spite of those supports the interest cannot find foothold to the end. "Bones of Contention," and "The Man that Stopped" are bold riotous things where the imagination rests gratefully. The author has made that type of story his own. I plump, however, for "Michael's Wife" where there is a rare delicacy of atmosphere and a reality of life that is as variable in its moods as wind and sky, and still as solid as the solid, earthy people that inhabit it. From the book as a whole I can only guess that Mr. O'Connor is striving for a "method of saying" rather than "to say" anything in particular. Even in "In the Train," a particularly neat story, the preoccupation with technique is very evident. In "Michael's Wife" he is carried out of himself, caught into a mood rather than a story, is suffused with earth and sea and sky in the natural way of the seacoast peasant and, so, touches for a moment a dark imagination of truth that is, artistically at any rate, its own assurance. This story; "In the Train"; and, perhaps, "The Majesty of the Law" (a delicate comedy of manners; though, after the surprise denouement, it seems to drag its tail) are stories I will remember in detail out of what is an exciting, experimental book.

PADRAIC FALLON.

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STORIES by Padraic H. Pearse. Dramatised by Rev. M. H. Gaffney, O.P. Talbot Press. 5s. net.

IN FIRST CENTURY IRELAND. By Padraic H. Pearse. Talbot Press. 6d. net.

The Stories of Padraic Pearse, dramatised by Father Gaffney, will be a boon to all who are interested in the Irish Theatre, and in the cause which Pearse lived and died for. They will also, as Miss Margaret Pearse observes in her introduction, be welcomed by all those who are interested in the education of children.

Father Gaffney has done his work sympathetically, though I demur to the printing of certain of the poems as Preludes and Postlude to some of the plays. Not that the poems, so placed, are in any way at variance with the plays. On the contrary, they are too much the same—too much the same to occupy these places in the dramatic progression of each play. For these particular poems, *are* the plays done in poetry, and the presentation of such complete expressions of their themes before the plays weakens their effect, while with the one coming after, the repetition likewise takes from the concentrated effect of the play. In "The Keening Woman," where the poem, used as Prelude, was originally incorporated in the story, the position is different.

The four plays left by Pearse are reprinted with the dramatised versions of the 'Stories.' It is a pity that such a book should not have better illustrations. The illustrations of the stage sets, however, and Part IV, dealing with the Plays on the Stage and the Plays in Production, will be highly valued by Producers.

"In First Century Ireland" is reprinted from the pages of *An Claidheamh Soluis*. It was the substance of a lecture delivered in English to the Students of the Metropolitan School of Art, Dublin, in 1907, and afterwards expanded

into a series of three lectures in Irish delivered before the Ard Chraobh that year. It is a fine lecture in which materials of ancient Irish Social History are treated with great visual power, and is stamped with that extraordinarily sure serene personality of Pearse.

The book is happily produced.

L. D.

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ROBERT EMMET. By Catriona Macleod. Talbot Press. 2s. 6d.

THE LIFE STORY OF WOLFE TONE. By A. de Blacam. Talbot Press. 5s.

Miss Macleod's book on Emmet is, as others of this series, so small as to preclude anything but an outline sketch, and this is relatively smaller because nearly one-third of it is devoted to a sketch of the Ireland immediately preceding and during 1798, before Robert Emmet comes into it at all. There are questions about Emmet which are yet to be resolved—*e.g.*, the exact genesis of his attempt, the reference in his speech to his being only a subordinate in the enterprise, and the statement, made by Addis Emmet the younger in his book *The Emmet Family* (New York 1898) that the rising of 1803 was suggested to Emmet in Paris by Government agents who wanted another rising—but Miss Macleod naturally has no space to cover these points. She has a statement on page 23 that "French, Latin and Gaelic were the language of the [Emmet] home." I do not know what the authority for this is, but it seems to me unlikely that Irish was a home language in the Emmet Family.

Mr. de Blacam's book is larger and fuller. But it is not complete. It suffers from the fact that its author has concentrated on proving, or disproving, certain facts or theories about Tone.

Mr. de Blacam regards Tone as

- (a) "The effective breaker of ascendancy and chief agent of that Catholic Emancipation which was consummated by Daniel O'Connell."
- (b) "One of the founders of modern Catholic Democracy."
Then he appears to suggest that Tone was
- (c) A believing and reverent, as well as a professing, Christian
and
- (d) That there is a doubt about his having committed suicide.

With regard to (a) and (b) I think that Mr. de Blacam materially overstates his case, and that Tone's importance in Irish history is quite otherwise. It is true that Tone rendered very great service to the Catholic body, but for Catholicism as such he had no feeling [in another place Mr. de Blacam refers to his "Protestant prejudices" in connection with the Pope] and he would not have lifted a finger to establish or help any Sectionalism. The Emancipation Bill of 1793 was really brought in because of the French victory at Jemappes, and not because of any proceedings of the Catholic Committee. The importance of Tone's connection with that Committee, and his work there and outside, was the *rapprochement* which ensued, in the United Irish Society, between Protestant and Catholic, which was laying the foundations, not of Mr. de Blacam's Catholic Democracy,

but of an Irish Nation, and of an Irish Nationalist ideal to which every following leader and movement adhered, however they differed on policy.

Tone's influence, in fact, was not on democracy at all, but on the Intelligentsia of Nationalism, as was that of Swift before him, and Davis after him. Tone was the greatest Irishman of his time, and like all our really great leaders, he was a realist, concerned with substance and not shadow. He was not a doctrinaire Republican, nor was he even a doctrinaire separatist. Separation, with him, was a means rather than an end, as it was with the United Irish leaders generally, and he turned to it only when all attempts at Parliamentary reform and Catholic Emancipation had failed. The real Separatists of course derived from Tone and Swift and Davis and Mitchel, but when they began in 1858 they began as Separatists and not as reformers, and their organisation survived through the generations until the Treaty. The Catholic Democracy of 1800-1829 was due to O'Connell more than to anyone else, with due mention of the pioneer work of Keogh and Sweetman in the days of the Catholic Committee. O'Connell it was who fought the Ascendancy on their own ground, in Lawcourt and Corporation and Platform, and finally on the hustings, and beat them, giving his people the courage to stand up straight and look everybody in the face.

As regards (c) Tone was, in his own words, "a Protestant of the Church of Ireland as by law established." In his comments on Tone's religious beliefs, Mr. de Blacam seems to take it for granted that because Tone was a good husband and father he must have been a believing Christian. It does not necessarily follow: nor is it of any interest to us now whether he was, or not, a true believer. But surely nobody can read the Diary without recognising that whatever Tone labelled himself he was in fact an Eighteenth Century Rationalist.

As regards (d) it must be stated that there is a reasonable doubt firstly as to whether Tone did commit suicide and secondly, if he did so, as to the circumstances in which he did do so. There is an old Dublin tradition that he was murdered to thwart Curran's writ: nobody save his jailors and the Prison Doctor was allowed to see him after conviction: his attempt to commit suicide was not mentioned until after the writ had been served: and everything which is known about his last days comes from enemy sources. But there is a letter from Fitzgibbon to Auckland in the Fourth volume of the Auckland Correspondence, in which Fitzgibbon, writing on 15th November, 1798, says "we had got into a little scrape by bringing up Mr. Tone for trial to Dublin by a Courtmartial, sitting by the side of the Court of King's Bench. We shall probably get out of it by the death of Mr. Tone, who was suffered to cut his throat on the day appointed for his execution; and if the vagabond should not die of his wound, we may get out of it, if his Majesty's Attorney-General will act as he has been advised to proceed." This letter seems to be a clear indication that, if Tone did cut his throat, some means were devised to induce him to do so.

These two books strengthen the conviction that the whole '98 period wants to be redone.

P. S. O'H.

P.S.—Mr. de Blacam quotes, of course, Tone's two most famous *dicta*, and there is a printer's error in each. In the *Men of Property* quotation *fail* is printed instead of *fall*. In the *Connexion with England* quotation *our* country is printed instead of *my*. Tone was a Co-operating Individualist rather than a *Comrade*.

"JACKETS GREEN." By Patrick Mulloy. (Grayson, 7s. 6d.).

"BENSON'S FLYING COLUMN." By Thomas P. Irwin. (Talbot Press).

Here are two more books of "the troubles." And even if one is, like myself, tired of hearing about Black and Tan raids, of ambushes, of the comic and tragic wars between Free Staters and Republicans, Mr. Mulloy's contribution is well worth reading. For this is a vigorous very much alive book, in which the author has no axe to grind, and is refreshingly detached. He gives us pictures of English soldiers protecting their prisoners from the fury of the Belfast mob; of Black and Tans playing cards with their captures, and also paying their debts to the astonishment of the Irishmen; of Free State officers torturing their Republican prisoners, of Republicans shooting down the friends with whom they fought side by side for Irish freedom; of Irish prostitutes bawling that they haven't encountered gentlemen since the British Tommies left the country! In spite of occasional carelessness and misplaced adjectives, Mr. Mulloy has the genuine drive of the narrative gift, while the authenticity and freshness of his dialogue are notable.

Mr. Irwin's novel is, on the other hand, written in green ink of the purest dye. Open at any page, and a quotation best gives the character and manner of the yarn:

God alone knows the awful suffering Davy endured as he lay in the shed, with his pal ready to sacrifice his life for him, and their glorious cause. The pain and torture he must have gone through to prevent himself from betraying their position to the enemy nobody will ever know, for it was through such uncomplaining suffering, hardships, and men like Benson and Harding that Ireland gained her measure of freedom.

As an adventure story it seems to me to fall somewhat below the high standard set by such productions as "Rover," but nevertheless a schoolboy cousin has passed it as "not bad."

N. H.

* * * *

JADE HOUSE. By Alan Downey. Dublin: E. J. Fallon.

This book was published a year ago and, with a few exceptions, received unfavourable reviews. This may be attributed to the majority of the characters that Mr. Downey has grouped together, irresponsible, non-moral people, swayed by any passion or impulse of the hour. Foterrell is frankly a brutal character, and his end is an unpleasant scene. Amy Pauline, whom we are told possessed to the full "the cold impassivity of the utterly pure and unawakened girl," yet is quickly swayed into acceptance of advice that should have been utterly abhorrent to her. But these characters are only the chorus to the theme of the story. It is the tale of a young man, a Sir Galahad in a way, a poet and a genius. He is a junior clerk in a drab government office, with no opening for his gifts, stifled, and suppressed. To him comes the millionaire and effete voluptuary, Roger Embrand, who recognises his gifts, and who is financing a revue. He believes that association with Austin—the fact of his presence—can recover his

own youth, and that by some intangible ghoulish way he will be rejuvenated. He makes an offer to Austin which if Austin accepts will take him from the office and open the way to fame. Will he write the lyrics for the revue? Will he leave the office, will he come and write them in Embrand's beautiful home, a mansion in the south of Ireland? It is an amazing and dazzling request. Yet Austin hesitates before a strong repulsion that he feels towards the man. Eventually he accepts. He moves, the young Sir Galahad still, among the people that form Roger's guests in Jade house. His love for Amy, who had been his ideal of purity and beauty, is partly killed by the advice she has followed, namely, to make love to Embrand. Austin, Mr. Downey says, "is original enough, and unspoiled enough to associate morality with genius." He is a sane and healthy youth, who recoils from coarseness and impurity, and believes in values that are outworn to the rest of the guests. He is an idealist, almost coldly so, yet he sees colour and warmth in nature's symbols, but colour and warmth transfused from some world that the inner sight of the poet only sees. In the scene in the cavern, alone, impressed by its beauty and strange enchantment, he comes to think that death was as beautiful as life. The pages dealing with his emotion are among the best that Mr. Downey has written in the story. The revue, the *Tribute to London*, is to be acted in one of the big London theatres, and Katherine Groat, the famous actress and Embrand's mistress, is to take the leading parts. Austin is thus brought into association with her, and while she tries to fascinate him, he only feels a strong repulsion for her. But he has to keep on civil terms with her. If she refuses to act the revue falls to pieces, and his lyric remains unsung. Embrand dies before the revue is placed, leaves Austin Jade House and a fortune, and to Katherine, whom he had married when dying, a larger one. Fortunately, failing to win Austin, she marries one of the promoters of the revue, and it is acted with great success, and Austin becomes famous. The story ends with his reconciliation with Amy Pauline. Though the conversations are sometimes too long and tedious, they are often, also, clever and entertaining. But I think Mr. Downey would have strengthened the story by more narrative. The book should be read. A story that the critics have largely decried calls attention to it. It has the life and interest to receive such notice.

L. MACMANUS.

Obituary.

Mr. D. P. Moran, founder and editor of *The Leader*, had a great influence in the early years of that paper, that is from 1900 till about 1904 or 1905, in drawing people into the Irish Ireland Movement. National Spring was in the air in those years, and his vigorous support of the language, of Irish manufacture, of rebuilding by ourselves, and his general presentation of what he justly termed *The Battle of two civilisations* won to his paper a large circulation and to various branches of the Movement a large influx of new members. In those years his paper was bought by everybody who bought *The United Irishman*, and he reached thousands of readers who would have been repelled by anything political or anything obviously sectional. But after the first years the paper and the policy degenerated. He allowed his irritation at "sunbustury" to lead him into a depreciation of fundamental nationalist instincts, and when he settled down to a weekly attack on "tinpikery" and "the green Hungarian Band" and an advocacy of the policy of "Collar the King" as he put it, much of his support and much of the breath of life left the paper. In the years that followed, as his outlook became that of a narrow and materialistic and intolerant nationalism, his paper ceased to be generally read or to have any influence. He published two books *The Philosophy of Irish Ireland* and *Tom O'Kelly*, both in 1905.

The first is a collection of six essays, written between 1898 and 1900 in *The New Ireland Review*, before the starting of *The Leader*, and containing his message in its purest and freshest form. He had nothing else to say, and he never really added to or improved on these essays, which will always have their place amongst the literature of the movement. The second is a satirical novel, tilting at his bugbears, of little interest.

But he was a personality, and he did contribute something tangible to national philosophy, and he will be remembered.

LLEWELYN DAVIES

Crompton Llewelyn Davies was, I think, the only example of a civil servant who was dismissed for his association with the Irish movement, and who was not an Irishman. He was solicitor to the Post Office, came in touch with Sinn Féin, and fully sympathised with it, through his wife, and was dismissed in 1921 following a raid upon her house in Dublin—always open to the men on the run—and his arrest.

I remember when he went to the Post Office, after Sir Robert Hunter's retirement, in 1912. Even a lawyer, in the civil service, tends to fall somewhat into the civil service tradition. Sir Robert Hunter's minutes had been in that tradition—that is to say, mellow, rounded, somewhat circumlocutory, and covering every hypothetical point. Llewelyn Davies, on the other hand, was direct, forcible, and straight to the point. In the leisurely placidity of a file, a minute of his came with a certain shock, not an unpleasant one but still a shock.

He was a man of character and ability, and deserves to be remembered here. It was understood that he was the author of a book *An Irish Commonwealth*, and a pamphlet, *National Land Policy*, published under the pseudonym of *Dalta* by the Talbot Press in 1920, and advocating the taxation of Land Values as a basis for reconstruction here.

P. S. O'H.

PAUL BOURGET

Paul Bourget, dying at 83, closes an epoch in French literature. For 40 years he wrote novels which have been highly regarded in France and which placed him in the forefront of French novelists of his time, with Anatole France,

Daudet, and Loti. In an age when the purely naturalistic novel, under Zola's powerful example, was carrying all before it, he wrote psychological or problem novels steadily, carefully written, serious, workmanlike and heavy. They have a value, psychological and social. But I doubt whether even the best of them—*André Cornélis* must be nearly that—will survive. There is more permanence in the lighter touch of Daudet, and certainly more in the mellow irony of Anatole France. French critics who have, at various times, compared him with Balzac and Flaubert will look rather foolish in fifty years.

P. S. O'H.

To the Editor of THE DUBLIN MAGAZINE, Dublin.

SIR,—Correspondents from different parts of the world have sent me papers, which report the death of Mrs. Elisabeth Förster-Nietzsche, and describe her funeral which was honoured by the presence of Adolf Hitler and other distinguished guests.

Some Non-German readers, as I gather from letters, are astonished about Hitler's presence on this occasion, for they are aware that Nietzsche condemned all the values upon which Present-day Germany claims to be founded—to wit : its Nationalism, its Socialism, its Antisemitism. These students of Nietzsche should however remember that the tribute of the German " Führer " was paid *not* to Nietzsche himself, but to Nietzsche's sister, and rightly so, for this sister has done a great deal for Nazi-Germany : she has modified, or better, falsified, Nietzsche's message, which was meant for an Elite in *all* nations, into a sort of Mythical Manifesto, that was *only* addressed to the chosen German people. Nietzsche himself, who during his conscious life severely distrusted his sister and who even reproached her with endangering his life on several occasions, would have been less delighted about the work of the late Nazi-Egeria, than the leaders of the Third Realm, who rightly honour a message of National Bigotry such as the Weimar-Pseudo-Nietzschean Clique has spread over the Fatherland in the name of the great philosopher.

This Fatherland, it should be added, nowadays has to swallow everything, that is prepared for it in Herr Goebbels' Propaganda Kitchen, but it must not be imagined that Silence here means Consent and that Intellectual Honesty such as Nietzsche demanded from his disciples, has died out entirely in Germany under the threat, whip or axe of the Brown Terror.

One American paper—*The New York Times*, Febr. 2nd—produces the above news about the Hitler-Nietzsche funeral under the following headline : " The Nietzschean Cult is marching on." This is so, but, as regards Nazi-Germany in the wrong direction. If this direction has lead, or will further lead into Disaster, I beg to warn Irish and other readers, *not* to hold Nietzsche's creed responsible, but its present day self-styled ministers.

I am, Sir, etc.,

Royal Societies Club,
St. James Street,
London, S.W.1,
March, 8th 1936.

OSCAR LEVY,
Editor of the authorised English
translation of Nietzsche's
works.